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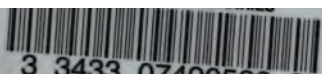
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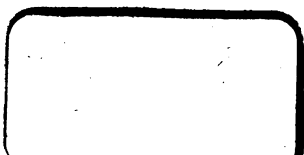
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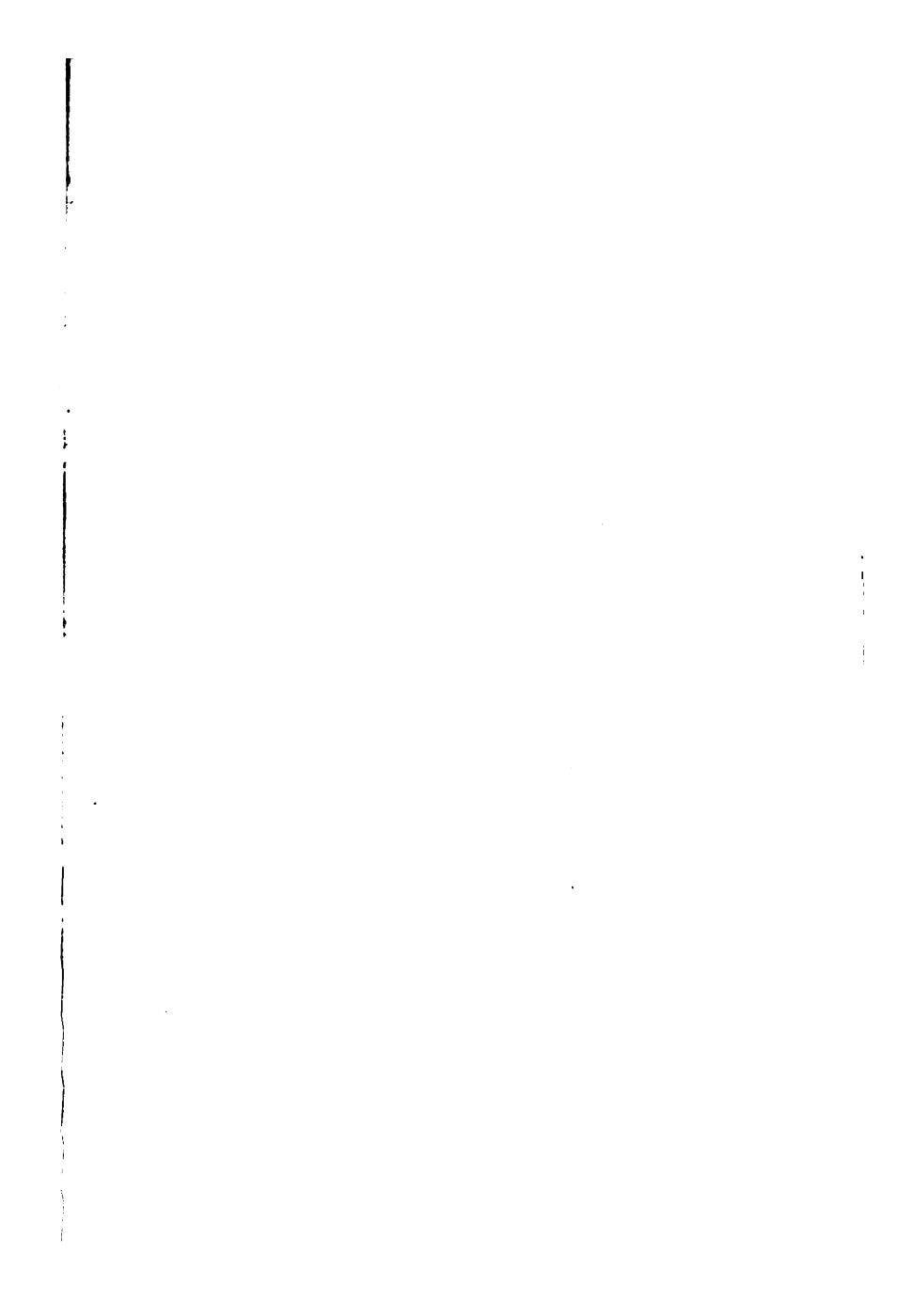


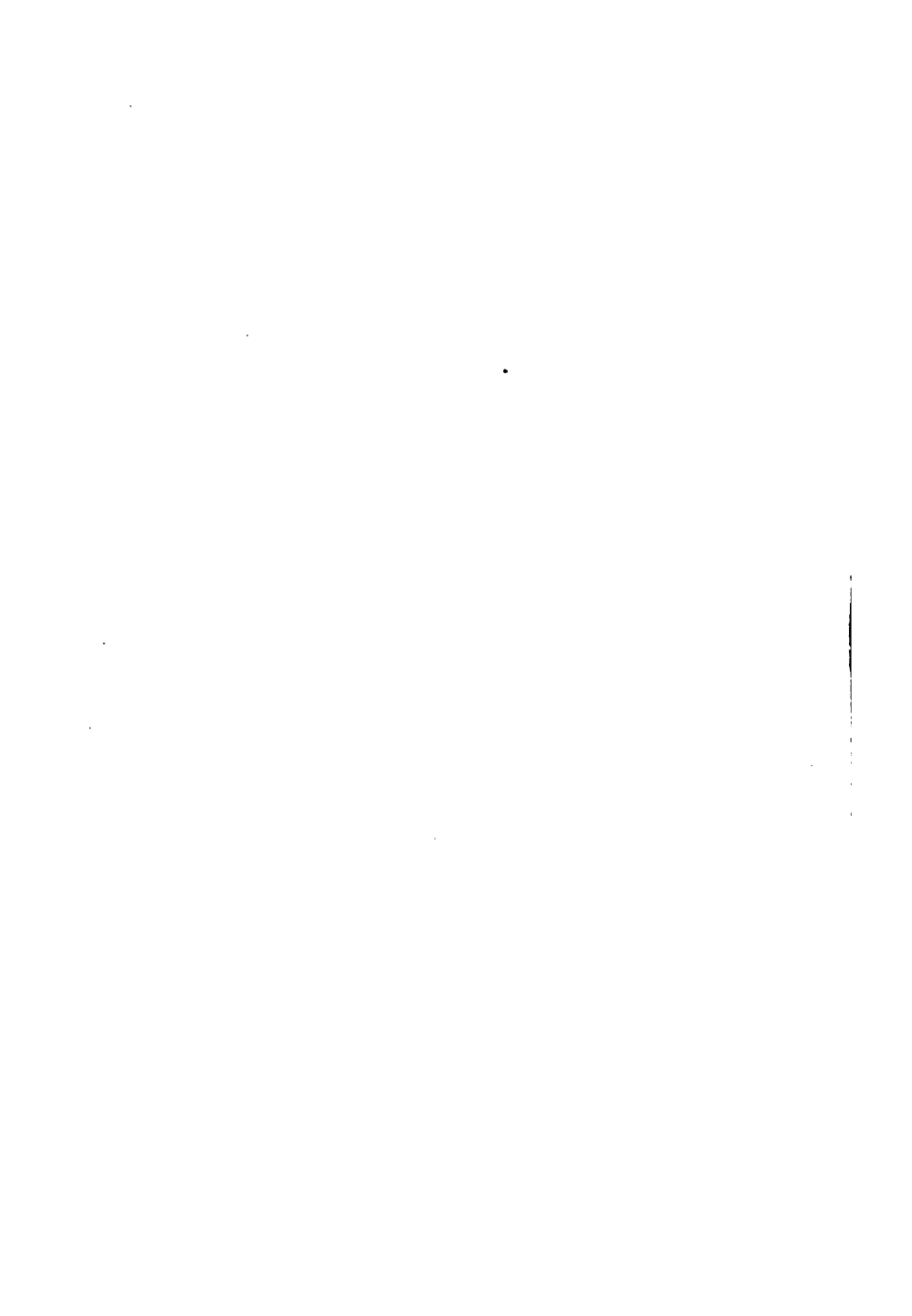
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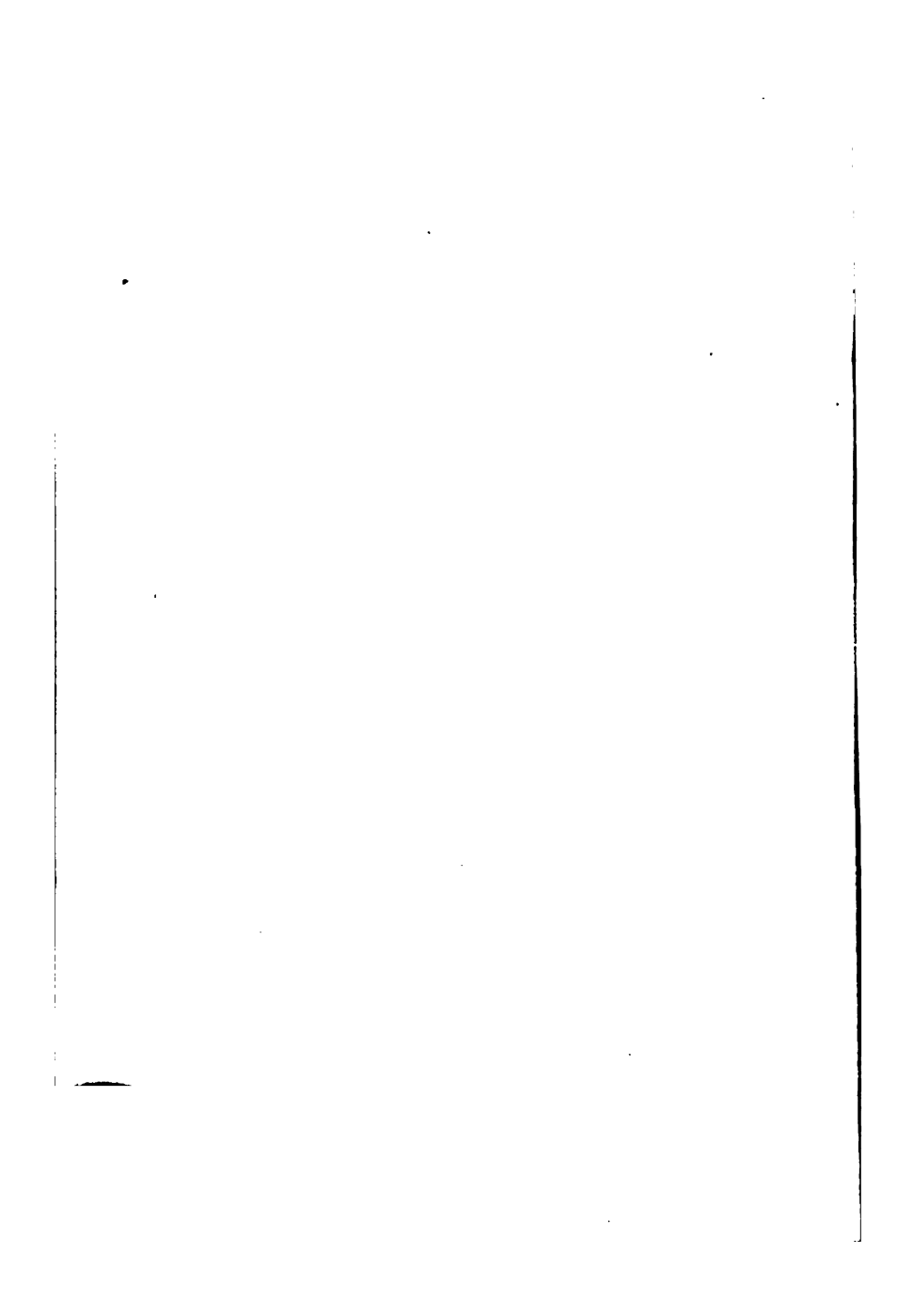


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NCM

Nov





## Elijah the Prophet.

## Extracts from Reviews.

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"Her Majesty has graciously been pleased to accept a copy of Mr. Washington Moon's poem, 'Elijah the Prophet,' an epic poem of great merit, exhibiting powers rarely equalled for sublimity and strength, and breathing a noble and an elevated spirit which deserves all praise."—*Court Journal*.

"The poem is one series of beautiful and brilliant gems and profound thoughts, set in pure and ornate language."—*St. James's Chronicle*.

"It is an epic poem of great beauty and power."—*Weekly Record*.

"A poem of unusual interest and beauty."—*Evangelical Christendom*.

"The most noticeable poem of the season."—*Bookseller*.

"The grandeur of the subject is well-nigh unsurpassed, and the poem is not unworthy of the subject."—*North British Daily Mail*.

"We hasten, as in duty bound, to say that we recognise the 'Elijah' of Mr. Moon, as really a sacred epic of the highest order."—*The Orb*.

"In this work the library has one of the most valuable additions that has for many years emanated from the press."—*Oxford University Herald*.

"A work that may stand in a high place among the specimens of modern English classical literature."—*Court Circular*.

"This magnificent epic poem before us is one of those rare issues, which, like wandering comets, appear only at long intervals. Every page teems with high poetic beauty, often soaring to the sublime. The author has approached his subject with studied care, and has mastered it in a style so grand, that little is left to be desired further than that the poet may attain the position which his brilliant epic entitles him to hold."—*Illustrated Weekly News*.

"We are bound to say that Mr. Moon's poem is a great work. There is a grandeur and sublimity that reminds one of Milton and of Young, even at their best, in the poet's description of the Day of Doom, and also of the Translation of Elijah. It is awarding no slight merit to the author to say that his whole poem breathes the purest morality and the loftiest devotion. Going through it is like going through a cathedral, where, as the grand music rolls on the ear, the eye is almost everywhere enchanted with visions of unearthly interest and scriptural beauty, breaking in richest colours from its storied windows, while the soul is touched and stirred with the deepest emotions of religion."—*Church and School Gazette*.





### *The Translation of Elijah.*

O who can picture that transcendent sight!  
Who fitly can relate the wondrous story!  
Who paint the aërial beauty of that night,  
Or sing the fleetness of those steeds of glory  
And God's triumphant chariot of light  
Entering Heav'n! Never in depth or height  
Had mortal gazed on such a scene before;  
Never shall years, how long soe'er their flight,  
The solemn grandeur of that hour restore,  
Till Heav'n's last thunder peals forth "It is done!"  
And the archangel, dazzling as the sun,  
Descends to earth; and, standing on the shore  
Of ages, swears with upraised hand by ONE  
Who lived ere time its cycles had begun,  
That time shall be no more.

# Elijah the Prophet.

A Poem,

BY

G. WASHINGTON MOON, F.R.S.L.,

Author of "The Dean's English."

THIRD EDITION.

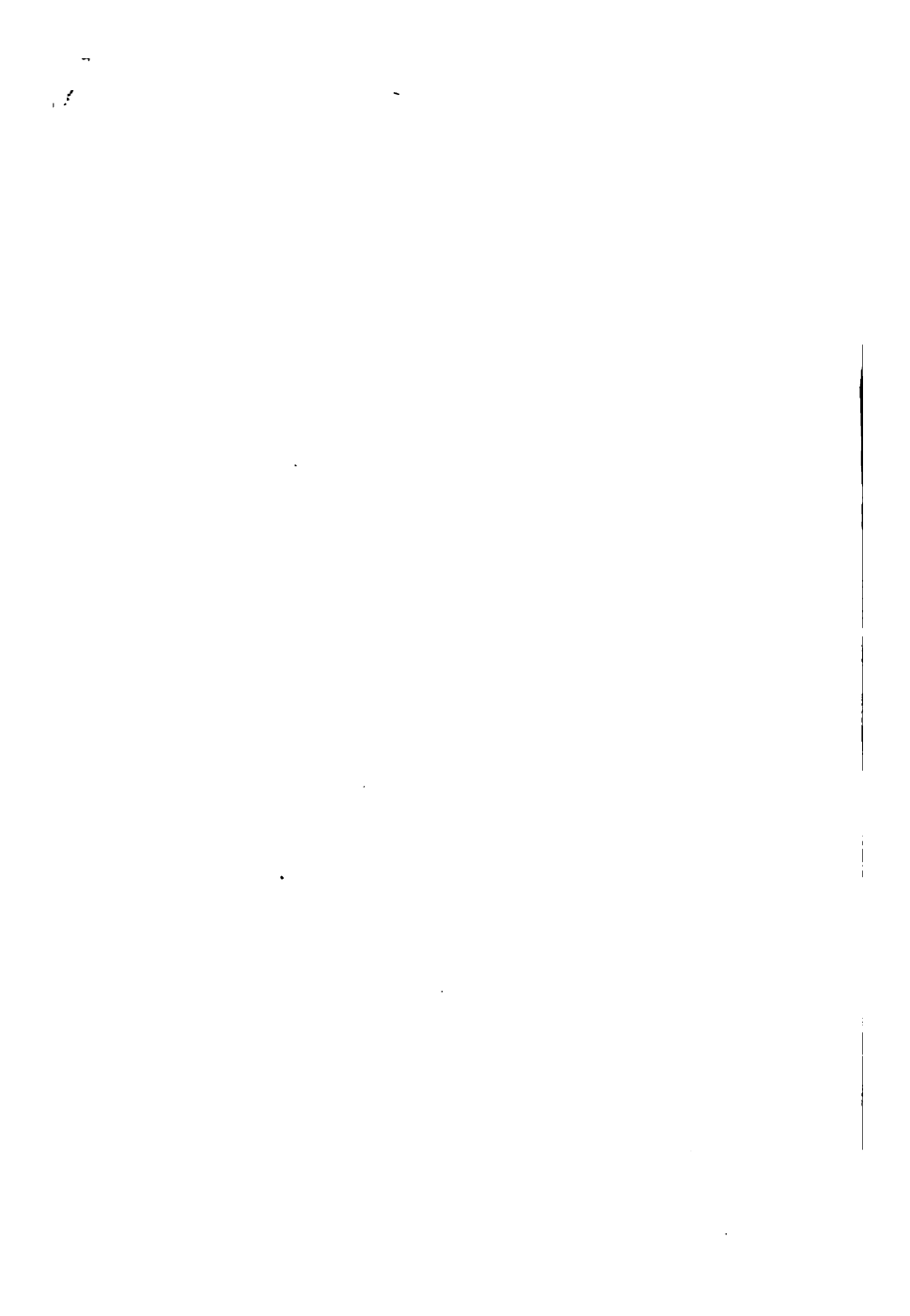
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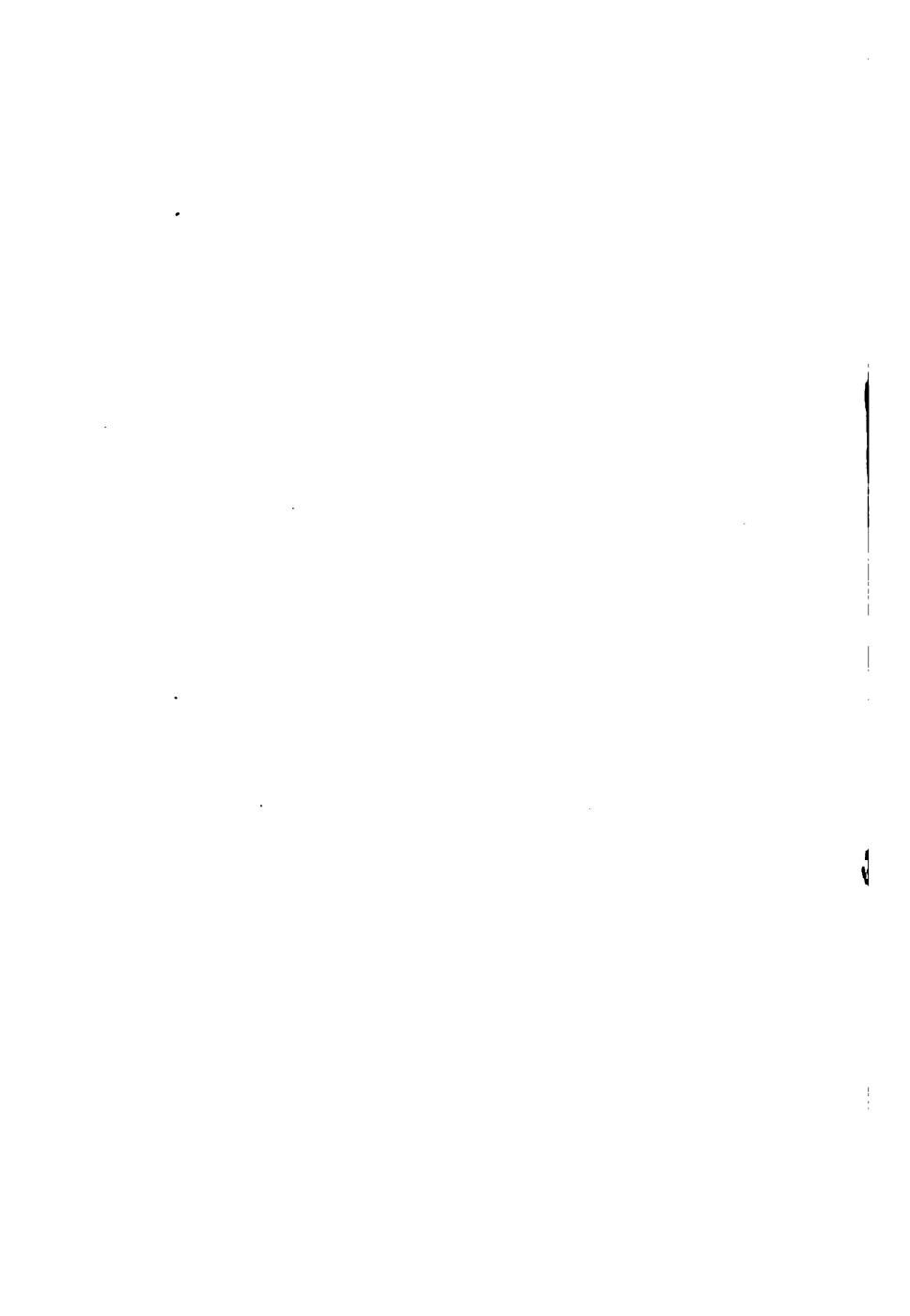
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D. F. -



“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of  
“my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Strength  
“and my Redeemer.”—PSALM xix, 14.





## PREFACE.

---

I HAVE undertaken a somewhat difficult task; perhaps an ambitious one.—I have chosen, as the subject for a poem, the history of that prophet who has appropriately been styled “the grandest and most romantic character Israel ever produced”;<sup>\*</sup> the stirring incidents of his life I have endeavoured to relate in the highest form of verse,—the sacred epic; and the stanza which I have selected as the vehicle for my thoughts, while it is the most beautiful, is also the most intricate we possess,—the Spenserian. But, remembering that MILTON, in describing the essentials of poetry, places simplicity first; I have, throughout the poem, been studiously careful to employ the simplest language consistent with the dignity of the subject.

There is one incident recorded in the life of the prophet ELIJAH concerning the chronology of which there has been

<sup>\*</sup> DR. STANLEY'S ‘Sinai and Palestine’, p. 325.

much difference of opinion.—The sending of the “writing” to JEHOAM;—was it antecedent to the translation of the prophet, or was it subsequent to it? DR. MACDUFF, in his recent admirable work, ‘The Prophet of Fire’, is silent on this matter. Every other event in the life of the prophet, whether recorded in the Old or in the New Testament, is dwelt upon with most careful minuteness by DR. MACDUFF; but the interesting subject of the “writing” is passed over by him without even the most remote allusion. This is very strange; but what is more so, is that DR. KRUMMACHER, in his deservedly esteemed life of the Tishbite, assigns the priority to the translation of the prophet, and believes the “writing” to have been miraculously sent to earth by ELIJAH, years after he had ascended to Heaven in a chariot of fire. I am compelled to differ with the venerable Doctor on this point, because the Scripture narrative admits of a simpler interpretation; and as truth is generally simple, so simplicity of interpretation is generally nearest to truth.

In the first place, it does not follow because the Scriptures record first the translation of the prophet, and afterwards the transmission of the “writing” from him, that this was therefore the order of the occurrence of those events. To preserve, as much as possible, an unbroken continuity of

narrative, historians often find it necessary to relate out of proper course certain circumstances; thus giving precedence to events which were not first in the order of time. This is done in the very book in which the translation of **ELIJAH** is recorded,—the Second Book of Kings,—the tenth chapter of which informs us of the death of **JEHU** after his having reigned over Israel twenty-eight years; while the twelfth chapter takes us back one-and-twenty years, and speaks of events which occurred in the seventh year of **JEHU**'s reign.

In the second place, the chapter describing the translation of **ELIJAH** is evidently parenthetical;—it has not any connexion with what precedes it, nor any with what follows; whereas the chapters between which it is inserted constitute one continuous narrative; the former ending with the death of **AHAZIAH** and a brief mention of his successor; and the latter beginning with the commencement of that successor's reign. The reason for which the translation of **ELIJAH** is spoken of between these two events is that, after the death-message to **AHAZIAH**, delivered by **ELIJAH** in the previous chapter, the history of **ELIJAH** was at an end, *as far as the events of his ministry had to be recorded by the writer of the Second Book of Kings*; for, it must be borne in mind, the "writing" which came to **JEHORAM** is not mentioned by that

historian. He describes the translation of the prophet; but it is the compiler of the Second Book of Chronicles, not the compiler of the Second Book of Kings, who speaks of the "writing" which was sent.

In the third place, it must not be supposed that because, after the account of ELIJAH's translation, it is another prophet who speaks as the ambassador of GOD, therefore ELIJAH had departed; for, during the lifetime of AHAB, when it is certain ELIJAH was on earth, GOD spoke to AHAB four times by other prophets. The first is described as "*a prophet*";\* had this been ELIJAH, no doubt he would, as on other occasions, have been mentioned by name; the second is said to be "*a man of God*";† the third is called "*a certain man of the sons of the prophets*";‡ and the fourth was, we know, "*Micaiah, the son of Imlah*". §

There is therefore every probability that the translation of ELIJAH did not take place at the time assigned for that event by DR. KRUMMACHER. Surely, the very circumstance of a letter being sent from ELIJAH to JEHOAM ought, in the absence of proof to the contrary, to be accepted as incon-

\* 1 Kings, xx, 13.      † 1 Kings xx, 28.      ‡ 1 Kings xx, 35.

§ 1 Kings, xxii, 8.

testible evidence that ELIJAH was on earth in the reign of that king. Such appears to have been the opinion of JOSEPHUS, for in several of the most ancient copies of his great work, that historian, after speaking of the letter being sent from ELIJAH, adds,—“*for Elijah was still upon earth.*”

The Scriptures are silent as to the *time* of the prophet's departure; all that is said is, “It came to pass *when* the “Lord would take up ELIJAH into heaven by a whirlwind”,—such and such were the circumstances of his departure. I have, in order to give completeness to the poem, availed myself of this silence of Scripture, to presume, not that the translation of ELIJAH was subsequent to the reign of JEHOHAM; its subsequence I believe to be a fact; but, that the prophet remained on earth and saw the fulfilment of his own prophecies;—the destruction of the whole house of AHAB, and of all the worshippers of Baal throughout Israel; and that then, and not before then, “there appeared a chariot “of fire, and horses of fire, and ELIJAH went up by a whirl-  
“wind into heaven.”

I shall never forget the diffidence, I might say the awe, with which I approached the conclusion of my epic, and realized that I had to describe the translation of the prophet.

That event is one of such overwhelming grandeur, that I was almost induced to adopt the resolution of finishing the poem in the simple and sublime prose of Scripture. However, having written all else, I ventured, though with much hesitancy, to attempt a description of the translation. In the treatment of such a theme neither failure nor success can be partial. To fail at all is to fail utterly; while, to succeed is to achieve no ordinary triumph. I lay before my readers the whole poem, and await their judgment. None will deny that to put into noble verse the grand history of the mightiest of the prophets is, from the very sublimity of the subject, one of the most difficult tasks that could be chosen; and one in which even the greatest poet might fail without disgrace.

LONDON, Nov., 1865.

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## ELIJAH THE PROPHET.



### *Invocation.*

#### I.

ONE lovely star still lingers in the sky,  
As if entranced in worship at God's throne ;  
Unconscious that the blissful moments fly,  
And she, so beauteous, shineth there alone.  
Her heaving jewelled breast to earth makes known  
The trembling love that lureth her to stay  
And God's great goodness rapturously own.  
But, gently roused by morning's earliest ray,  
Her brow of light she veils from sight, and steals away.

## II.

Still gazing up with earnest eyes to trace  
The silv'ry path that star of morn is taking,  
I see, in brilliant azure heights of space,  
Fair fleecy clouds from softest slumbers waking,  
As if the waves of light o'er heav'n now breaking  
Had dashed the blue with foam. No longer cold  
The glorious scene appears ; for day is making  
The summer sky its varied tints unfold ;  
First gray, then pink, and now the horizon flames with gold.

## III.

The shadowy mists creep up the roseate mountains,  
Dissolve, and fade away like waking dreams ;  
For in the east, as if from sunny fountains,  
Day's dazzling rays arise. Now dimpled streams  
Answer with smiles heav'n's smiling face which seems  
To bend o'er earth with love ; and dewdrops bright  
In beauty sparkle ; but the sun's pure beams  
Kiss them, and lo ! they vanish from our sight.  
O life too brief ! from flow'r and leaf they take their flight.

## IV.

Hark ! in the vale some little bird is singing,  
And sweetly calls its fellows to awake ;  
And now the lark, into the clear air springing,  
Echoes the call ; while from each bush and brake  
The happy-hearted songsters, answ'ring, make  
The welkin ring with praise. Rich odours rise  
In worship from the flow'rs ; and, from the lake  
Reflecting in its depths the o'er-arching skies,  
A curling vapour, as of incense, heav'nward flies.

## V.

God's praise the foaming cataracts proclaim,  
And bowing in deep reverence adore.  
The echoing mountains, too, repeat His name,  
Then veil their faces with the clouds once more.  
His praise the billows sound from shore to shore ;  
And viewless winds, those spirits of the deep,  
Exulting join the ocean's anthem-roar,  
And time, to bounding waves' wild music, keep,  
As ever in God's praise their solemn harps they sweep :

## VI.

And when yon sun, which now is seen to rise,  
Shall light at last creation's funeral pyre ;  
And earth shall perish, and the azure skies  
Become one awful winding-sheet of fire ;  
While stars, like sparks, fly upward and expire ;  
Their elements dissolved by fervent heat ;  
E'en then, throughout that dissolution dire,  
When clouds in darkness surge beneath God's feet,  
Chaos, in mighty thunders, shall His praise repeat.

## VII.

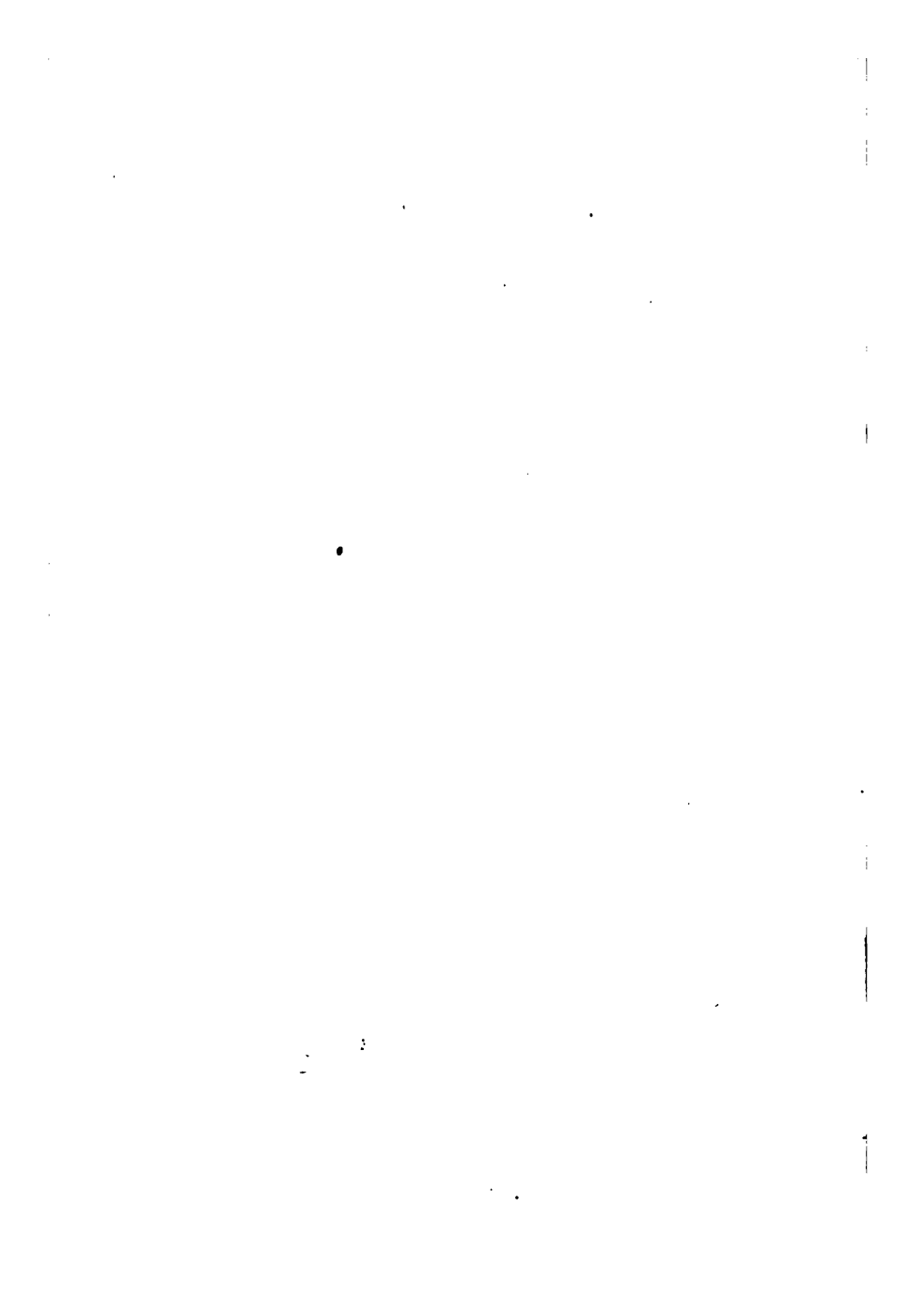
And shall the universe of God resound  
For ever with His high and glorious praise ;  
Shall worship in the scent of flow'rs be found,  
And adoration in each star's pure rays ;  
Is there no dew-drop which in beauty lays  
Its soft cheek on a rose-leaf, nor a spring,  
Nor mountain torrent, but whose glad life pays  
Its Maker homage ; and shall *I* not bring  
To Thee a tribute of *my* love, my God and King !

## VIII.

The worlds of splendour in the midnight sky,  
Which gem-like shine so beautifully bright,  
Are but Thy breath, Almighty God Most High,  
Condensed whilst passing through primeval night  
With these creative words,—“ Let there be light ! ”—  
Do Thou but speak, and all that's dark in me  
At once shall take its everlasting flight ;  
And, like a star o'er life's tempestuous sea,  
My song may haply guide some wand'ring one to Thee.

## IX.

O Spirit of unutterable love,  
Of highest wisdom and unbounded grace,  
Speak ! and as sprang the stars in heav'n above,  
From deepest darkness of the realms of space,  
To show for ever to the human race  
Thy still unchanging goodness ; here shall shine  
Some starry truths which hearts will joy to trace ;  
Uplifting them from earth to things divine ;  
The peace and gladness ours ; the praise and glory Thine.



## Introduction.

---

### I.

How subtile is the light of beauty ! Naught  
In painter's art has e'er that light expressed ;  
And language, what is it ? We clothe a thought  
In speech ; but words, it still must be confessed,  
Are faint and broken outlines ; at the best,  
Mere sketches. Thoughts are oft like butterflies  
Which, seeing on some lovely rose's breast,  
We try to catch.—Lo, instantly they rise !  
If caught, the beauty of their plumage with them dies.



## II.

Others are like reflected rainbow-hues  
Which children vainly grasp at in the stream :—  
The lovely colours, to be caught, refuse,  
And broken is each bright prismatic beam :  
And some are like the music of a dream  
That ravished us in sleep ;—the thrilling strain  
Had notes so exquisite, we almost deem  
It Heav'n-born ; and we strive to bring again  
Its rich flood o'er our senses ; but we strive in vain.

## III.

Ah, well ! 'twill not be always thus ; the time  
Is coming when the soul shall trustfully  
Reveal itself. Sweet bell-like words will chime  
Its loving thoughts ; and richest melody  
Of utterance, in perfect harmony  
With truth, take up the strain ; and I no more,  
Like wild bird pining in captivity,  
Shall sing with aching heart ; but Heav'nward soar,  
And in God's golden sunlight joyously adore.

## IV.

Say ; when high thoughts are in thy brain assembling,  
And Heav'nly visions o'er thy fancy roll,  
Hast thou a consciousness of music trembling  
In chords of deepest rapture in thy soul ;  
As if the Beautiful held sweet control  
O'er life's full pulse of joy within thee beating,  
And set each thought to music ? Is thy goal  
The good and true, and not the base and fleeting ?  
If so, stretch forth thy hand :—I give thee friendly greeting.

## V.

Yield to the rapture of poetic thought,  
And muse with me on scenes of days gone by ;  
For heroes, kings, and prophets who have caught  
True inspiration from high Heav'n, shall vie  
In deep and solemn interest, whilst I  
Their deeds heroic tell. I fain would sing  
Of other teachers ;—of sweet flow'rs which lie  
Around us strewn, or, by the wayside, spring,  
Smiling their grateful thanks to Heav'n's eternal King ;

## VI.

But all is dark ; yes, dense clouds frown above ;  
No stars in heav'n, nor flow'rs on earth I see ;—  
No gentle words of home, or hope, or love,  
Are written on this page of history.  
Yet let us read it ; it is well to be  
Familiar with the truths the past conveys ;  
And we may find its dense obscurity  
The black foil throwing out the gems which blaze  
Upon the signet-ring of Time in these *our* days.

## VII.

O friend, let us be thankful that *we* live  
Governed by one who well deserves our praise ;  
A queen who, for the homage that we give,  
Gives us her heart ; and love with love repays.  
A nation's strength with joy her will obeys ;  
A nation's pride enshrines her in its heart ;  
A nation's smile, too, like heav'n's sunny rays,  
Falls at her feet ; and when she shall depart,  
Millions of bitter tears from loving eyes will start.

### Canto First.

---

*"I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets."—HOSEA xii, 10.*

#### I.

IN Israel at the zenith of her power  
A palace rose, which in the sun's first rays  
Looked as if earth had blossomed into flower,  
And stone and cedar breathed forth silent praise.  
Arches on arches tow'rd o'er columned ways,  
And gardens graced those arches overhead ;  
And, from the terraced roof, the eye might gaze  
Upon a plain whereon had fought and bled  
Armies whose mighty foot-fall shook the world with dread.

## II.

In spacious hall the king his courtiers met ;  
And priceless were the treasures there displayed ;—  
Goblets of gold with flashing jewels set ;  
Chased silver urns whence fragrant incense strayed ;  
Rich tapestry where fair hands had portrayed  
Bold deeds of noble daring and of slaughter ;  
And beauteous flow'rs, in many a wreath arrayed,  
By many a lovely bright-eyed Jewish daughter ;  
And in the midst, from fountains, gushed forth sparkling water.

## III.

Aliah, the king, in robes of Tyrean dye,  
And wearing on his head a golden crown,  
Was seated, with his haughty queen, on high ;  
And princes came before him ; their renown  
Making them welcome there. They, bowing down,  
Did homage to their king. He bade them rise,  
Asked of the state, and added with a frown,—  
“What of Jehovah's worshippers? The wise  
“Among the sons of men, His service must despise.

## IV.

"His pow'r has gone ; if e'er His pow'r had sway ;  
"For, lo ! His Law declares that when, on earth,  
"Men unto other gods their homage pay,  
"Heav'n shall be sealed !—the clouds shall not give birth  
"To fruitful show'rs, that there may come a dearth  
"Of nature's stores. But see ! the clustered vine  
"Its richness yields for swift-winged hours of mirth ;  
"And beauteous flow'rs round summer bow'rs still twine.  
"So we will laugh at threats and quaff the blushing rosy wine.

## V.

"Ha ! Ha ! What were life but for wine ? Rise now  
"And drink confusion to——" "Thyself and thine !"  
Exclaimed a solemn voice. King Ahab's brow  
Grew dark as night ; the cup that held the wine  
Was dashed aside ; and, with a scowl malign,  
He asked whence came the voice. Then once again  
That voice was heard : "Unto thyself and thine !"  
And Ahab saw Elijah ; but in vain  
Sought utt'rance for the sudden rage that burnt his brain ;

## VI.

For, from that noble face there beamed a soul  
Of such sublime and overwhelming pow'r,  
That Ahab felt the blood within him roll  
Back to its fountain, and his proud heart cow'r  
Beneath that glance. His knit brows darkly low'r,  
But fury still restrains its panting breath.  
A pause ensues, as dread as midnight's hour ;  
And in a stillness, deep as that of death,  
Elijah speaks :—"Hear me, O monarch ; for thus saith

## VII.

"The God 'gainst whom thou liftest up thy voice,  
"And in thy bold impiety blasphem'st :—  
" 'I know thy ways, and that thou dost rejoice  
" 'Ever in evil deeds ; and even deem'st  
" 'Thy guilt thy glory ; and that thou esteem'st  
" 'The sin of Jeroboam as a slight  
" 'And venial thing ; and arrogantly dream'st  
" 'Of bolder crime ! Thou scalest pow'r's proud height,  
" 'That unto sin thy soul may swoop with swifter flight :

## VIII.

“ ‘ And to its climax thou thy guilt dost bring,  
“ ‘ By taking, as thy partner on the throne,  
“ ‘ The daughter of Ethbaal, Zidon’s king,  
“ ‘ Who worships Ashtaroth. But be it known  
“ ‘ To thee, to her, to all, that I alone  
“ ‘ Am God ! ’ ” Fire flashed from Jezebel’s dark eyes,  
And swords leaped from their sheaths ; and in a tone  
Of anger, as when ocean’s waves arise,  
The thousands there exclaimed :—“ Jehovah we despise ! ”

## IX.

Elijah stood unmoved ;—*he* feared no sword !  
And thus God’s message unto them conveyed ;—  
“ Mark ye my words, despisers of the Lord ;  
“ Tremble, O earth ; be horribly afraid ;  
“ And desolate be thou ; for He who made,  
“ And who upholds, the universe, declares  
“ The sun shall perish ; ev’ry star shall fade  
“ And fall from out the coronet Night wears,  
“ But this word shall not fail ; and thus Jehovah wears :—



## X.

“ ‘ In Israel shall fall no dew nor rain,  
“ ‘ For weeks, for months, for years ; and ye shall know  
“ ‘ ’Twas not that I was pow’rless to restrain,  
“ ‘ That all things have continued on to flow  
“ ‘ In their accustomed courses. Crime may go  
“ ‘ Awhile unpunished ; but wrath’s slumb’ring fire  
“ ‘ Will rage at last. E’en now in store there glow  
“ ‘ Vast fires volcanic,—treasures of Mine ire,  
“ ‘ Against the time when earth shall meet her sentence dire.’ ”

## XI.

“ Madman ! ” said he, “ thou soon shalt meet thine own.  
“ How darest thou, unsummoned, thus appear  
“ In this our palace, and insult our throne  
“ With impious threats ? Ye gods of vengeance, hear !  
“ Why sleep your thunders ? Man ! I neither fear  
“ Nor will I serve, thy God. Begone !—I say ;  
“ And, by this cup, if thou dost linger near——”  
Heav’n’s lightning dashed the uplifted cup away ;  
And, on the banquet floor, king Ahab speechless lay. .

## XII.

Loud rolled the thunder,—a terrific peal ;  
The hall was filled with hot sulphureous smoke ;  
A moment the foundations seemed to reel,  
Then shudderingly steadied from the stroke.  
Some guests were heard, in terror, to invoke  
Baal, the god of Ekron, to their aid ;  
Others with fear were dumb ; and some but spoke  
In trembling accents. All were sore afraid,  
And in their blanchéd faces they their fears betrayed.

## XIII.

Elijah left the palace, deeply grieved  
In spirit at the weight of misery  
He knew was coming on his proud, deceived,  
And guilty race, for their impiety.--  
He's gone ; none daring to oppose ; but, see !  
The king awakes as from a troubled dream ;  
And, half uprising, stares all vacantly ;—  
His mind being racked with dread of the Supreme,  
Whom, in his impious folly, he has dared blaspheme.

## XIV.

The courtiers, nigh paralyzed by fright,  
Approached with trembling the still prostrate king ;  
Believing that the lightning in its flight  
Had pierced his brain ; but he, recovering,  
Half rose, for still in terror did he cling  
Unto the ground ; then said,—“ From out my grasp  
“ The lightning dashed my cup and seemed to fling  
“ Heav’n’s fire into my brain ; and, like an asp,  
“ To sting me. O most horrible it was, to gasp

## XV.

“ Not for existence, but for death ; ay, death !  
“ But, as I gasped, life more intense became ;  
“ And reptiles were emitted with my breath.  
“ Like scorpions they were, and tried to aim,  
“ At these mine eyes, their barbéd stings. Then flame  
“ Enveloped me ; and, lo ! they instantly,  
“ All scathed and burning, crept into my frame ;  
“ And there, in throes of torture, seemed to be  
“ A very life in death,—a living agony.

## XVI.

“ At length they died ; and dying became cold ;  
“ Icily cold, and clammy ; and their slime  
“ Oozed through my pores ; and then my fevered hold  
“ Of life grew fainter ; and the things of time  
“ Passed from my vision ; but an awful clime,  
“ All fire, received me that I there might feel  
“ Tortures more wracking still ;—my ev’ry crime,  
“ Which mocking fiends proclaimed with hellish zeal,  
“ Was burnt into my writhing soul with Wrath’s great seal.

## XVII.

“ Then hell’s volcano hurled me forth again ;  
“ And like a meteor I flew through space ;  
“ The world receded ’neath me ; and in vain  
“ I looked for moon and stars ;—at lightning-pace  
“ They vanished past me in my upward race  
“ With scorching winds which rushed with me from hell ;  
“ And far below I left the last faint trace  
“ Of things created ; yet a fearful spell  
“ Still bore me on through realms where Gloom and Chaos dwell.

## XVIII.

“ Before a dazzling sapphire throne I stood,  
“ In darkness mantled like a thing of night ;  
“ Whilst all around, the spirits of the good  
“ Stood radiant,—enrobed in living light !  
“ World there was none, but an effulgence bright  
“ Whose centre was the throne of Deity ;  
“ And, o’er that centre, angels winged their flight ;  
“ And, in their rapid transit, seemed to be  
“ A golden halo of intensest brilliancy.

## XIX.

“ One kingly spirit drew a mighty breath ;  
“ Then long and loud a trumpet blast he blew ;  
“ Calling earth’s millions from the shades of death,  
“ That ev’ry man might stand for judgment, due  
“ According to his deeds. Slowly in view,  
“ The countless dead, like spectral shadows, came ;  
“ And, as they nearer to the brightness drew,  
“ A book was opened ; and, on leaves of flame,  
“ Each saw inscribed his sins whilst thunders called his name.

## XX.

“ On, and still onward, rolled that countless host :  
“ As roll the waves of ocean’s flowing tide ;  
“ Now shrinking back, as from a dreaded coast,  
“ Now dashing on, as though they death defied.  
“ But, O that Book !—that blaze upon which Pride  
“ Looked and was blinded ! In the surging shoal  
“ Of human beings none himself could hide  
“ From its all-piercing light ;—it swept the whole  
“ Assembled universe, and lighted up each soul :

## XXI.

“ And then God severed, in a hurricane,  
“ The gathered millions of the dead, asunder ;  
“ And wrought the lightning’s flash into a chain ;  
“ And riveted its links with bolts of thunder ;  
“ Whilst, from abysmal darkness roaring under,  
“ Satan uprose ! His eyeballs seemed to smoke  
“ With fierce and deadly hatred ; and mute wonder  
“ Checked all the nations’ breath ; but, as he spoke,  
“ God’s red right arm of wrath was raised,—and I awoke.”

END OF FIRST CANTO.



### Canto Second.

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"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."—ECCLES. viii, 11.

#### I.

THE morrow dawned ; the sun in splendour rose,  
And cloudless shone in heav'n's ethereal blue.  
The evening came ; Earth sank to calm repose ;  
And, o'er her, Night his sable mantle threw,  
Then watched her slumbers, like a lover true,  
With ever-blissful eyes. Thus day by day  
Went on ; and being summer, when the dew  
And rain, in eastern climes, their fall delay,  
Men heeded not the drought ; but laughed their time away.



## II.

The flow'rs soon drooped on Nature's fevered breast ;  
And wild bees missed the flow'rs and pined away ;  
The unfledged birds, too, sickened in each nest ;  
And parent birds bemoaned with piteous lay  
Their desolated bow'rs. Day after day  
Each scene once beauteous became more drear ;  
The herbage withered 'neath the sun's fierce ray,  
And plants and trees cast off their leaflets sear ;  
And down the face of man oft coursed the silent tear.

## III.

Ahab, amazed at that which met his view,  
Sought for Elijah ; but all vainly sought.  
Then Jezebel, in fiendish passion, slew  
The prophets who in love the people taught.  
But Obadiah, full of kindly thought,  
One hundred hid, by fifty in a cave,  
And daily to them bread and water brought ;  
And thus from death the nobly good did save.  
Elijah's friend was he, and generous as brave.

## IV.

Meanwhile Elijah, under God's direction,  
Had journeyed eastward, and, by Cherith's brook,  
A safe retreat had found, where calm Reflection  
Might love to rest on Providence, and look  
Contentedly at mysteries. The book  
Of nature was before him, and he read  
With studious mind and loving heart. He took  
Delight in all God's teachings, and was led,  
From flow'rs and stars, to truths which star-like radiance shed.

## V.

Picture the sacred prophet as he dwelt  
By Cherith's brook ;—around his form he wore  
A hairy mantle girt with leathern belt ;  
While, in his hand, a pilgrim's staff he bore ;  
And, near his heart, a treasure valued more  
Than all earth's wealth,—the Law of God Most High,  
Life's only chart. Of food he had no store ;  
But God, who feeds the ravens when they cry,  
By ravens fed Elijah till the brook ran dry.

## VI.

No weary sense of loneliness came o'er him ;  
For though, while there, no human voice he heard ;  
The rippling water of the stream before him  
Seemed oft by hidden silv'ry music stirred ;  
And often the sweet singing of some bird,  
Whose little breast with love's rich notes was swelling,  
To his ear sounded like the joyous word  
Of some pure spirit, of God's goodness telling ;  
And these and kindred sounds made glad his lonely dwelling.

## VII.

Into that peaceful glen near Jordan's stream,  
A mountain torrent bounded from on high ;  
Then dimpled into loving rest, to dream  
Of stars which there, as in another sky,  
Mirrored their trembling beauty. Flow'rs still sigh  
Glad worship there to God, in odours sweet  
As angels' breath ; for angels graciously  
Came to the prophet in that calm retreat ;  
Making the spot most hallowed ground ;  
And still the sunshine lingers round the impress of their feet.

## VIII.

In noble spirits ever are enshrined  
A reverence for God, and true delight  
In all His works. The prophet joyed to find  
God's voice resounding through the depth and height :—  
The delicately beautiful, the might  
Of mountain storms, the lovely quiet face  
Of heav'n by day, and starry worlds by night  
Glimming the glorious blue of boundless space,  
Spoke to his glowing heart of God's o'erflowing grace.

## IX.

But after many days the brook dried up  
Because no rain had fallen on the land.  
Murmured Elijah at that bitter cup ?  
No ;—well knew he 'twas in his Father's hand :  
And yet methinks I see the prophet stand  
With grave astonishment by Cherith's brink ;  
And hear him in bewild'ring doubt demand,  
As more and more he sees the water shrink,  
“ Did God not promise that of this brook I should drink ? ”

## X.

Most true, Elijah ; but thy doubts dispel,  
And lift to Heav'n that heart so crushed with fears ;  
For He who truly doeth all things well,  
Would send thee hence to dry a widow's tears ;  
And this refreshing streamlet disappears  
That thou may'st be more willing hence to go.  
Ah, hark !—What sound is that which greets our ears ?—  
'Tis but the ev'ning winds which towards us blow.  
That bright'ning light ?—the golden sunset's fervent glow.

## XI.

So mightest thou and I have thought, my friend,  
Had we been there ; but well Elijah knew  
The rushing sound of wings which did portend  
That towards the earth a mighty angel flew.  
Then closer round him he his mantle drew,  
And veiled his face, and bowed himself in pray'r ;  
Whilst thus in words of kindness, sweet but few,  
The angel spoke :—"To Zarephath repair ;  
" Behold, a widow woman shall sustain thee there."

## XII.

“O, kind and blessed God,” Elijah said ;  
“Thy loving voice has ever been to me  
“A comfort and a joy, for Thou hast led  
“Me as a child ; and in simplicity  
“And confidence I still would walk with Thee,  
“Unquestioning my Father’s gracious care ;  
“Yes, though a heathen widow is to be  
“My stay, and I to Zarephath repair ;  
“For while Thy name is Love, no mortal may despair.”

## XIII.

Elijah rose and went ; and coming to  
The wall of Zarephath, he, at the gate,  
Beheld a poor and care-worn woman who  
Was ent’ring, bearing sticks. So desolate  
She seemed, he straightway asked her of her state,  
Then craved a cup of water ; and as she  
Regarded him with look compassionate,  
He said to her :—“I pray thee give to me  
“A morsel, too, of bread ; for very charity.”

## XIV.

Laying her burden down, she raised her eyes  
Unto Elijah, and thus sadly spake :—

“ My own wants teach me never to despise

“ Another’s pray’r ; and for Jehovah’s sake

“ I’d help thee, but have not a single cake ;

“ And but of oil and meal a small supply ;

“ And I have gathered sticks, that I may bake

“ The little morsel, that my son and I

“ May once more eat together ere, alas, we die.”

## XV.

Her very soul lay prostrate in the dust,

And thus Elijah spoke :—“ God faileth none !

“ Trust thou in Him ; and manifest thy trust

“ By making first a cake for me ; that done,

“ Then make one for thyself and for thy son,

“ Thine only son,—God’s gift of priceless worth ;

“ For thus has said the High and Mighty One ;

“ The meal and oil shall last until the dearth

“ Be past, and God once more send rain upon the earth.”

## XVI.

With joyous faith, Elijah's voice obeying,  
She cast away each dark foreboding fear ;  
And went home trusting to his gracious saying,  
And found how true the words of Israel's seer ;—  
The meal and oil sufficed them for a year ;  
Yet ne'er became the store of meal the less,  
Nor failed the cruise of oil. O, ye who hear  
These simple truths, remember in distress,  
Jehovah still is love, and love delights to bless.

## XVII.

Of many a truth, Elijah was the teacher ;  
His chief theme, God's great love to all our race ;  
And, as she listened to the mighty preacher,  
The tears of joy coursed down her furrowed face.  
But there was one great lesson of God's grace  
She had to learn ; 'twas this ;—God will not dwell  
In any other than the heart's chief place ;  
And there her son, with love no words can tell,  
Was cherished.—Ah ! she sinned in loving him too well :



## XVIII.

And so God took him ; yea, he drooped and died,  
E'en like a flow'r upon a loving breast.  
God loved that mother ; therefore from her side  
He took her son, as unto Him seemed best,  
That on Himself alone her heart might rest.  
That weeping heart was torn with anguish wild ;  
And thus its overwhelming grief expressed :—  
“ Why so long closed those eyes which ever smiled  
“ Upon thy widowed mother ?—Speak ! my child, my child ! ”

## XIX.

Poor bruised heart, thou callest him in vain ;  
Those fast-closed eyes shall never open more,  
Unless God raise the dead to life again,  
And to thine arms thy now lost son restore.  
Meekly her loss that widowed mother bore ;  
But said unto Elijah,—“ Why did I  
“ Receive thee when thou didst my aid implore ?  
“ For, since thou cam'st, my sin of days gone by  
“ Is brought to God's remembrance,—and my son must die.”

## XX.

Elijah said to her,—“Give me thy son” ;  
And, from the mother’s bosom as she wept,  
He gently bore away her lifeless one  
Into an upper chamber where he slept,  
And laid him on the bed ; then softly stepped  
He back and closed all silently the door ;  
And, kneeling down, prayed thus :—“ O God, accept  
“ Our thanks for Thy great goodness heretofore ;  
“ And, to this peaceful home, again life’s joys restore.”

## XXI.

Three times embraced he then that clay-cold form,  
And raised his soul to God, in fervent pray’r,  
Beseeching Him that little heart to warm.—  
“ Faith falters, but it yields not to despair ;”  
He said, “ faith still I have. Yes, Lord, I dare  
“ Believe that Thou my suit dost entertain.  
“ What though no record tells me Thou hast e’er  
“ Restored the dead ?—that need not pray’r restrain !  
“ No ! Lord, let this child’s soul come into him again.”

## XXII.

Jehovah heard Elijah's pleading voice ;  
And instantly the boy awoke and smiled.  
" O woman," then Elijah said, " rejoice !  
" God, in His love, restores to life thy child."  
Words could not utter all the rapture wild  
Of that full heart, as round her boy she threw  
Her loving arms and clasped him to her breast.—  
Her lips were dumb with joy ; but God, who knew  
Her heart, knew though its thanks were not addressed  
To Him in words, its love His goodness still confessed ;  
And He that love accepted, and that heart had rest.

END OF SECOND CANTO.

## Canto Third.

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"When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn  
righteousness.—ISAIAH xxvi, 9.

## I.

THE fearful drought Elijah had proclaimed,  
Continued ; and no rain fell ; no, nor dew ;  
And Syria, for sylvan beauty famed,  
Was parched and burnt, and desolate to view.  
Mount Carmel languished ; and no roses grew  
On lovely Sharon, where they bloomed of yore.  
The beauteous lilies no reviving knew ;  
And Eschol's vines, which erst such clusters bore,  
Were sapless, leafless, dead.—The vintage-shout was o'er !

## II.

But after forty months had passed away,  
Jehovah this word to Elijah sent :—  
“ Show thou thyself to Ahab. I will stay  
“ The rain no longer ” ; and Elijah went.  
Now famine raged throughout the whole extent  
Of Syria ; and countless dead were lying  
Unburied, 'neath the open firmament  
Of heav'n ; and, through the film of death, seemed eyeing  
The sun and, from afar, the eagles swiftly flying.

## III.

Then Ahab said to Obadiah :—“ Go  
“ And search thou well for pasturage, and pass  
“ Through ev'ry vale where streams were wont to flow ;  
“ For, peradventure, we may yet find grass  
“ To save the horses and the mules.” Alas,  
To think that e'er there should have been days when  
A man was far less cared for than an ass !  
But there are Ahabs now, as there were then,  
Who more for dumb brutes care than for their fellow-men.

## IV.

Good Obadiah hastened to obey  
The king's command to search each shady dell ;  
And lo ! Elijah met him in the way,  
And cried, " Hail ! Obadiah ; is all well ?"  
Startled, he stood as if some mystic spell  
Bound him ; but soon love triumphed over fear.  
" My lord Elijah ! " said he, and then fell  
And kissed his feet. " Ev'n so," replied the seer ;  
" Return and tell thy lord, king Ahab, I am here."

## V.

Then Obadiah said,— " What have I done,  
" That thou to death wouldst so deliver me ?  
" As liveth God ! I swear that there is none  
" Of all the nations where, to look for thee,  
" King Ahab has not sent ; and solemnly  
" He took of all an oath when they did say  
" They found thee not ; and now it thus will be,—  
" The Spirit of the Lord will carry thee away ;  
" And Ahab, being mocked, will me most surely slay.

## VI.

“ But I, thy servant, feared God from my youth :  
“ Did none e’er tell my lord my doings when  
“ They slew the blessed martyrs of the truth ?  
“ How, risking life, I hid a hundred men  
“ By fifty in a cave in this wild glen :  
“ And dost thou think I fear death now ?    Nay, nay ;—  
“ No more, believe me, than I feared death then ;  
“ But never will I throw my life away.”  
Elijah answered,—“ I will see the king this day.”

## VII.

Then Obadiah ran and told the king,  
Who, with surprise, cried,—“ How ! Elijah here ?”  
“ Most true, O king ; this mountain pass will bring  
“ Thee quickly unto him ; I left him near.”  
Thus urged, he went ; although with heart of fear ;  
And, meeting him, he said,—“ I hold thee now,  
“ Thou troubler of my people !”    But the seer  
Answered king Ahab, with undaunted brow,—  
“ It is not I who trouble Israel, but thou ;

## VIII.

“ Yes, thou and all thy house, in that ye live  
“ Regardless of the judgments of the Lord,  
“ And that ye follow Baal ! But now give  
“ Command that Israel with one accord  
“ To Carmel come, with Baal’s priests abhorred,  
“ And Jezebel’s four hundred prophets. There  
“ Let them entreat their god that he afford  
“ Proof of his being ; and let fire declare  
“ Who is the Lord, and who alone can answer pray’r.”

## IX.

So Ahab sent and gathered all the hosts  
Of Israel to Carmel ; and they came  
From Dan and Bethel, Mizpeh and the coasts  
Of Tyre and Sidon ; for, the deathless fame  
Of him who closed the heav’ns in God’s great name,  
Had spread throughout the kingdom far and wide ;  
And when they heard the messengers proclaim  
That he would meet them on Mount Carmel’s side,  
They, through Esdrælon’s plain, surged onward like a tide.



## X.

I stand in spirit on Mount Carmel's height ;  
Beneath me rolls the broad Ægean sea,  
Blue as the heav'ns above, in whose glad light  
The crested waves are bounding, wild and free.  
Mount Lebanon, in snowy sanctity  
Appears almost celestial ; and seems  
As if the glorious earth there yearned to be  
In fellowship with heav'n ; while heav'n's pure beams  
Commingle with the snow which high in cloud-land gleams.

## XI.

Nearer, and turning eastward, I behold  
The lake of Galilee in beauty sleeping ;—  
A diamond whose setting is the bold  
Rough mountains which in kingly pride are keeping  
Watch o'er their treasure. Kishon's stream is leaping  
Through groves of palm trees, into Acre's bay ;  
And southward, o'er Esdrælon's plain are sweeping  
The thousands who, from cities far away,  
Journey to meet Elijah on the coming day.

## XII.

From morn till eve they came ; from eve the same  
All through the night ; and when the morning broke,  
Elijah to the waiting thousands came,  
And thus with firmness and persuasion spoke :—

“ O Israel, why bow beneath the yoke

“ Of Baal’s service ; yet from day to day

“ Live on in doubt whose aid ye should invoke ?

“ If Baal be the God, to Baal pray ;

“ But if Jehovah, then to Him your homage pay.

## XIII.

“ Jehovah has of old His pow’r made known ;

“ And He will now that pow’r make known again.

“ I, Great Jehovah’s prophet, stand alone ;

“ But Baal’s prophets are four hundred men ;

“ Let each an offering make ready ; when,

“ I’ll call on Him whose altar here lies broken,

“ And call ye on the name of your god ; then,

“ The God that answers by a fiery token,

“ E’en He is God.” The people said, “ ’Tis fairly spoken !”

## XIV.

Therefore the priests could no reluctance show.  
“Now,” said Elijah, “slay your bullock first,  
“For ye are many ; but let there be no  
“Concealed fire ’neath the sacrifice ; for curst  
“For ever before God be he who durst  
“Deceive this people.” So the priests drew near,  
And, having sacrificed, they madly burst  
Into a frantic yell, half hope, half fear ;  
And cried from morning until noon,—“O Baal, hear !”

## XV.

And, when none answered them by voice or flame,  
They leaped upon the altar in despair ;  
And then Elijah, about mid-day, came,  
And thus with irony rebuked their pray’r :—  
“Cry ye aloud ; your god ’s far off ; and there  
“Perhaps is talking ; or he is pursuing  
“His foes ; or haply journeyeth somewhere ;  
“Or, fresh from war, and, weary with imbruing  
“His hands in blood, is now in sleep his strength renewing.”

## XVI.

Thus taunted, they became more furious still,  
And, unto Baal, still more loudly cried,  
And cut themselves with knives and lancets till  
Their blood gushed out ; and then they prophesied,  
When noon had passed away, that eventide  
Would solve the problem and give victory  
To Baal ; but no voice to them replied ;—  
Save the weird laughter of the winds and sea,  
And mountain echoes answering derisively.

## XVII.

From priests to people then Elijah turned,  
And said, with loving voice, “ Come near to me ” ;  
For o’er them all, his noble spirit yearned,  
And longed that they from priestcraft should be free.  
There was a ruined altar near ; and he  
Rebuilt it as it was in days of yore ;—  
Of twelve stones built he it, that there might be  
A stone for ev’ry tribe, and men once more  
In brotherhood unite, Jehovah to adore.

## XVIII.

A trench around the altar then he made,  
As great as was sufficient to contain  
Two measures full of seed ; and next he laid  
The wood in order ; and when he had slain  
The bullock and divided him in twain,  
He laid him on the wood. Then said he,—“ Fill  
“ Four barrels now with water ; for, though rain  
“ For years has fallen not, a fountain still  
“ Gushes with joyous plenty half way down the hill.”

## XIX.

They ran and filled them, “ Pour it now,” said he,  
“ Upon the sacrifice and on the wood.”  
’Twas done ; and all the people wond’ringly  
Around about the altar mutely stood.  
“ Now lest a thought that fire is hid there, should  
“ Dwell in the heart,” said he, “ of any one,  
“ Again do so.” ’Twas done, so that there could  
Be no fire there. “ Now let the water run,”  
Said he, “ and fill the trench ” ; and once again ’twas done.

## XX.

Elijah then came near and said,—“ O Thou  
“ Whose name, and whose alone, is GOD MOST HIGH ;  
“ In lowliest abasement would I bow  
“ Myself before Thee ; yet with faith draw nigh,  
“ Believing Thou dost always hear the cry  
“ Of hearts sincere. Behold, I now appeal  
“ To Thee to manifest Thy majesty.  
“ O Thou who, answer'ing pray'r, the heav'ns didst seal ;  
“ Open those heav'ns by fire, and thus Thyself reveal.”

## XXI.

Then to the earth the dazzling lightning fell,  
Consuming both the sacrifice and wood,  
And very stones ; ay, and the dust as well,  
And water in the trench ; and those who stood  
On Carmel and beheld the burning, could  
Not bear the brightness thus around them thrown ;  
But bowed their heads and cried,—“ O Great, and Good,  
“ And Mighty One of Israel ; we own  
“ That Thou art God o'er all, and reign'st supreme, alone.”

## XXII.

“Then take the prophets,” said Elijah, “and  
“Let none of them escape ; for well ye know  
“The Law of God containeth this command :—  
“‘If any one enticeth thee to go  
“‘And serve and worship other gods ; although  
“‘He is thy brother, or one dearer still,  
“‘Thou shalt not spare, nor pity, him ; nor show  
“‘Him any mercy ; but shalt surely kill  
“‘That base apostate.’ This commandment now fulfil.”

## XXIII.

They took the prophets ; and down Carmel’s side  
To Kishon’s brook they hurried them away,  
And slew them there ; and reddened was the tide,  
With human blood, that rolled to Acre’s bay.  
Ah ! horrid was the slaughter on that day.  
Four hundred bodies floated down the stream ;  
And ev’ry ghastly visage seemed to say :—  
“No cheering thought, no soul-inspiring beam  
“Of hope illumed my passage from life’s fevered dream.”

## XXIV.

The king was there, in gorgeous robes attired ;  
He heard the challenge which Elijah made,  
And saw his triumph when Jehovah fired  
The prophet's sacrifice ; and, as if swayed  
By righteous ardour, he unsheathed his blade  
And cheered the people on while they imbrued  
Their hands in blood ; but ah ! his zeal betrayed  
Its utter falseness. It could but delude  
The ignorant infatuated multitude.

## XXV.

Elijah scornfully to Ahab said,—  
“Go thou, and eat and drink ; I hear a sound  
“Of most abundant rain.” He knew him wed  
To pleasure ; and that when the parchéd ground,  
By rain refreshed, should be with verdure crowned,  
He would forget God's judgments ; and again  
In all his former wickedness be found.  
The prophet, therefore, in ironic strain,  
Said,—“Go thou, eat and drink ; I hear a sound of rain.”



## XXVI.

Pride blinded Ahab so that, strange to say,  
He did not mark the bitter irony  
Concealed in those bland words, and went his way  
To eat and drink in thoughtless revelry.  
Elijah, bowing in humility,  
Prayed, and then told his servant to repair  
To Carmel's top, and look out towards the sea.—  
He came back saying,—“I see nothing there.”  
Six times Elijah said,—“Go back ; God answers pray'r.”

## XXVII.

On God's great faithfulness he took his stand ;  
And soon the youth exclaimed,—“God heareth thee !  
“Behold, a cloud no larger than my hand,  
“Ariseth like a vapour from the sea !”—  
“So,” said Elijah, “shall it ever be  
“When thou believingly shalt pray for what  
“Will honour God. Go thou and say from me  
“Unto the king, ‘Prepare thy chariot  
“‘And get thee quickly down, that the rain stay thee not.’”

## XXVIII.

He went ; and lo, e'en while he told the king,  
Dark heavy clouds rolled up surcharged with rain ;  
The wind arose, those freighted clouds to bring  
Over the land ; and soon Esdrælon's plain  
Was swept by eager thousands once again.  
Elijah, who no sympathy could feel  
For Baal's priests, still studied to obtain  
Respect for kings. Exemplary in zeal,  
And preaching ever by some deed,  
He ran before king Ahab's steed,—  
Though fleetest one of Arab breed,  
And flying at its utmost speed,—from Carmel to Jezreel.

## XXIX.

God's hand was on the prophet, and he flew  
As if his feet had wings ;  
And though long ages have rolled by since then,  
That lesson of God's prophet unto men is still divinely true.  
Truth changes not with lapse of time !  
No ; ever as we higher climb  
The mount of years, there rings,  
Borne upward as on trumpet-blast,  
This lesson from the mighty past,—“ Respect is due to kings !”



## Canto Fourth.

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"I had fainted, unless I had belied to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord."—PSALM xxvii, 13, 14.

## I.

THE haughty Jezebel, from Ahab heard  
The story of Elijah's victory,  
And how the priests were slaughtered at his word,  
And Kishon's brook that rolleth rapidly  
Had borne their ghastly bodies out to sea.  
Then, when she knew of all that he had done,  
She said,—“So let the gods do unto me,  
“And also more, if as the life of one  
“Of those whose course in time's swift race is run,  
“I make not his life ere shall set to-morrow's sun.”

## II.

When Obadiah of her fury heard,  
That faithful governor of Ahab's court  
Came to Elijah, bearing secret word  
How that his life by Jezebel was sought.  
So when he saw that staying there was fraught  
With certain danger, he arose and fled ;  
And came to Beersheba, having brought  
His servant with him thither ; but then said,  
“ Return, my son ; God's blessing rest upon thy head.”

## III.

Then all alone Elijah went his way  
From Beersheba towards the wilderness ;  
And sat beneath a tree, at close of day,  
Dejected, weary, and in sore distress ;  
And thus did he his hopeless grief express ;—  
“ Enough ! O Lord ; my life now take away ;  
“ For, wretched and despairing, I confess  
“ I am not better than my fathers ; nay,  
“ I've served Thee with less zeal and less success than they.”

## IV.

God heard the prophet's sad desponding voice,  
But granted not his wayward heart's desire ;  
In love refusing him his foolish choice,  
To purify him in affliction's fire.  
Not always wisely do our souls aspire ;—  
We know not what will make us truly blest.  
Our pray'rs would oftentimes bring misfortunes dire,  
If God were to concede us our request.  
But He in love denieth that which is not best.  
O, tempest-tossed and weary one, in God's love rest.

## V.

An angel, to Elijah sleeping, came,  
And, gently touching him, said, " Rise and eat."  
He woke ; and saw one like a dazzling flame  
Of sacred fire, then standing at his feet ;  
But, ere he could that form angelic greet,  
It vanished from his sight ; and there before him  
He saw a cake of finest flour of wheat,  
And little cruse of water to restore him.  
Thankful, he ate and drank ; then sleep again came o'er him.

## VI.

Once more the angel said, "Arise and eat,  
"Because the journey is too great for thee."  
O wondrous grace ! O words most kind and sweet !  
O vista through which Heav'n appears to me !  
So, Father, speak Thou in eternity :—  
With words of love, sweet as a parent's kiss,  
Waken Thy sleeping child. Let Thy voice be  
The first I hear in Heav'n's bright world of bliss,  
And last kind voice of love which comforts me in this.

## VII.

Elijah ate the food that God had sent ;  
And then, with thankful heart for all His care,  
O'er burning desert-sands he fasting went ;  
For forty days and nights a wand'rer where  
His fathers wandered forty years ; and there,  
On Horeb's sacred mount, by grief oppressed,  
He, in a cave, poured out his soul in pray'r  
To Him whose grace has said to the distressed,—  
"Come unto Me, and lean upon My breast,  
"And tell Me all thy woes, My child, and I will give thee rest."

## VIII.

Then God addressed to him this solemn word,—  
“What dost thou here, Elijah?”—and he said,  
“I was, for God, most jealous; but I erred  
“Through yielding unto fear. I hither fled  
“Because my spirit was o’erwhelmed with dread;  
“For ah! Thine altars they have thrown down; yea,  
“The blood, too, of Thy prophets they have shed;  
“And I, e’en I alone, am left; and they,  
“With cruel hatred, seek to take my life away.”

## IX.

Again God spake, and said to him,—“Now go  
“Thou forth and stand before Me”; and he went  
Obedient to God’s command; and lo!  
A whirlwind in its fury came, and rent  
The mountains round him; and, its wrath being spent,  
An earthquake shook Mount Horeb to its base;  
Fires subterranean then finding vent,  
Their flames shot up to heav’n, as if to trace  
Jehovah’s awful name upon unbounded space.



## X.

But not in whirlwind, earthquake, or in fire,  
Does God the knowledge of Himself impart ;  
We hear, we fear, we tremble, or expire ;  
Only the voice of love can touch the heart.  
Life's bitter penitential tears will start  
Not 'neath the curses of the broken law ;—  
Thunders may peal, and lurid lightnings dart  
In fury round us ; it is love must thaw  
The fount of tears, and unto God our spirits draw.

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## XI.

The whirlwind in its fury passed away ;  
The earthquake in the mountains sank to rest ;  
The far off rolling thunders seemed to say,—  
“Great God, we worship Thee, the Ever Blest” ;  
And kindred feelings thrilled the prophet's breast.  
Then all was peaceful as the sky we see  
When storms are o'er, and, in the glowing west,  
The sunlight fades, and night's dark mystery  
Is brightened by the stars.   What say those stars to thee ?

## XII.

Ah ! hast thou never heard their Heav'nly voices ?  
Is not thine ear attuned to catch their song ?  
Hark ! while we speak the angelic choir rejoices,  
And chords are struck, now tremulous, now strong,  
And now a diapason ; and a throng  
Of richest notes in choral harmony  
Floats down to earth. Hush ! Hush ! I would prolong  
Its faintest echoes ; for it is, to me,  
Hymns from the spirit-land, telling, Great God, of Thee.

## XIII.

After the earthquake and the fire, there came  
A still small voice of love. In mercy true  
And gentleness, it breathed Elijah's name ;  
And Peace, around his neck her soft arms threw,  
And kissed away the tear-drops, as the dew  
Is kissed, by sunshine, from the summer flow'rs ;  
And he rejoiced in spirit to renew  
Communion with Him whose love embow'rs  
With blessings and bright hopes these trembling hearts of ours.

## XIV.

Again there came to him this solemn word,—  
“What dost thou here, Elijah?”—and he said,  
“I was, for God, most jealous; but I erred  
“Through yielding unto fear. I hither fled  
“Because my spirit was o’erwhelmed with dread;  
“For ah! Thine altars they have thrown down; yea,  
“The blood, too, of Thy prophets they have shed;  
“And I, e’en I alone, am left; and they,  
“With cruel hatred, seek to take my life away.”

## XV.

God answered,—“Towards Damascus go thy way,  
“And Hazael anoint as sov’reign there:  
“And unto Jehu, too, this word convey;—  
“‘Hail! captain of God’s people; make thou bare  
“‘Thine arm, and smite the house of Ahab; spare  
“‘Not old nor young; but sweep them to the tomb  
“‘And reign thou over Israel.’ But ere  
“The house of Ahab meet their righteous doom,  
“Elisha, son of Shaphat, call, as prophet in thy room.

## XVI.

"Then this shall come to pass ;—him that escapes  
"The sword of Hazael, shall Jehu slay ;  
"And him that yet from Jehu's sword escapes,  
"Elisha, by my Spirit's sword shall slay ;  
"And whereas thou despondingly didst say  
"Thou wast alone ; O, be it known to thee,  
"I have in Israel, of those who pray,  
"Sev'n thousand who have never bowed the knee,  
"Nor Baal kissed, nor worshipped any God but Me."

## XVII.

The solemn shades of ev'ning closed around  
The prophet, on Mount Horeb's lonely height ;  
And suddenly, yet gently, died the sound  
Of that kind voice ; as dies the beauteous light  
Of day in Eastern climes. But stars most bright  
Soon shone where golden sunlight shone before.  
So with the seer ;—when God withdrew, 'twas night ;  
But not a starless midnight as of yore.—  
God's truths were stars, and made Elijah's heart adore.

## XVIII.

Then o'er the desert he his steps retraced ;  
But O, how different that desert seemed !  
It was no more a drear and arid waste ;  
It was a Paran,—it with beauty teemed ;  
'Twas a Peniel, for there God's face beamed  
Upon His servant. Ah ! this earth appears  
Oft as if sunlight ever o'er it streamed ;  
And often, too, a very vale of tears ;  
For all we see, we colour with our hopes or fears.

END OF FOURTH CANTO.

## Canto Fifth.

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"Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies ; let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble ; neither be ye terrified because of them ; for the Lord your God is He that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you."—DEUT. xx, 3, 4.

## I.

As mighty tempests hurl on rock-bound coasts  
The surging billows of the angry main ;  
So, proud Ambition poured the Syrian hosts,  
With noise of thunder, on Esdrælon's plain.  
But He who curbs the raging deep, can rein  
War's fiery coursers snorting in their pride,  
And dash to earth the riders, and again  
Roll back the battle's madly foaming tide :  
And such the fate of those who Israel's God defied.

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## II.

Benhadad came with two-and-thirty kings ;—  
With horsemen and with chariots they came ;  
Swift as if borne upon the tempest's wings ;  
Thund'ring as storm-clouds thunder Wrath's dread name.  
Over the hills their spears rose like a flame  
From forests set all suddenly on fire.  
Terror swept on before them, for their fame  
Flew like the wind ; and desolation dire  
Revealed the death-strewn pathway of their deadly ire.

## III.

The shock of battle, on Samaria fell ;  
But failed through king Benhadad's love of wine.  
Unto his princes, Syria's king said,—“ Tell  
“ King Ahab thus Benhadad says :—‘ Resign  
“ Thy silver, gold, and wives ; for all are mine.’”  
Did Ahab this aggressive claim repel ?  
No ! He most gladly answered,—“ All are thine.”  
He counted up the cost, and reckoned well  
That loss were gain, if loss meant losing Jezebel.

## IV.

Either the Syrian monarch ascertained  
That he had no cause to congratulate  
Himself upon the treasure he had gained ;  
Or else, ambition, still insatiate  
When all is won, esteemed no treasure great  
While aught was unpossessed. He sent to say ;—  
“ Besides that which I claimed, I delegate  
“ My servants this proud city to survey,  
“ And all that’s pleasant in thine eyes to bear away.”

## V.

Then Ahab called the elders of the land,  
And said to them,—“ I pray you mark, and see  
“ How this man seeketh mischief. His demand  
“ For all my wealth and wives I willingly  
“ Acceded to, in hope that it might be  
“ The price of peace ; but, not with that content,  
“ He sendeth to demand still more of me.”  
They said, “ Of this, Benhadad shall repent ;  
“ Harken not unto him, nor give thou thy consent.”



## VI.

So Ahab to Benhadad sent back word,—  
“I yield all thou didst ask at first as due ;  
“But nothing more” ; which, when Benhadad heard,  
He swore to raze Samaria, and strew  
Her dust on high, till ev’ry wind that blew  
On earth had scattered it, and all was gone.  
King Ahab back to him this answer threw ;—  
“Let not him boast who puts his armour on,  
“As he may on whose prowess victory’s sun hath shone.”

## VII.

Benhadad heard this when he was disgracing  
His manhood, by intemp’rance, in his tent.—  
He and the kings, by drunkenness debasing  
Themselves below the beasts. Astonishment  
Seized every mind, that he, who had so bent  
Before Benhadad, now should answer, “No” ;—  
And, flushed with rage and wine, Benhadad sent,  
Ord’ring that when Mount Hermon’s peak should with the  
    sunrise glow,  
They should unfurl their flags, and hurl themselves upon the foe.

## VIII.

A prophet then approached king Ahab, saying ;—  
“ Thus saith Jehovah ;—‘ Hast thou seen this horde  
“ ‘ Which Syria ’gainst the city is arraying ?  
“ ‘ Even by them shalt thou know I am Lord ;  
“ ‘ Idols their trust,—defeat be their reward.’ ”  
“ By whom,” said Ahab, “ shall they fall ; and how ? ”  
“ The prophet said,—“ Beneath the avenging sword  
“ Of these thy princes shall they fall.” “ And now,  
“ Say who shall guide the battle ? ” And he answered,—“ Thou ! ”

## IX.

He numb’ring then the heads of those young men,  
The princes of his kingdom, found there were  
Two hundred and a score and twelve ; and then  
He marshalled all the people who could bear  
Arms ; and of Israelites, he found that there  
Were seven thousand ; these the king sent out,  
Commanded by the princes. Soon the air  
Was rent by their defiant, deaf’ning shout,  
As, rushing on their foes, they put them to the rout.

## X.

The Syrians fled, while Israel pursued,  
Fierce as a whirlwind sweeping o'er the plain.  
The foe once rallied, but soon flight renewed,  
By terror urged, nor stopped, nor turned again.  
Vain all their prowess ; and their numbers vain ;  
For, God had fought for Israel that day ;  
And king Benhadad fled, nor tightened rein,  
But flew with all his horsemen ; he and they  
Shouting, as on they passed ahead,—“ Away ! Away ! ”

## XI.

A prophet came upon the battle-field,  
And, to the king of Israel, said,—“ Go,  
“ Strengthen thyself ; for thou once more must wield  
“ The avenging sword against the Syrian foe.”—  
Success, at all times, is from God, we know ;  
But *our* work ever must with His combine.  
Think of His charge to Ahab ; and then show  
That whilst thou leanest on an arm divine,  
Thou strengthenest *thyself* ;—and victory is thine.

## XII.

The courtiers soon assembled at Damascus,  
And to their sov'reign reverently said ;—  
“ If, of our late defeat, the king should ask us ;  
“ We answer,—this was why the Syrians fled ;—  
“ The gods of those who were to vict'ry led,  
“ Are of the hills, and hence our rout and flight ;  
“ But bid us to the plain march forth instead,  
“ And we will sweep down with o'erwhelming might ;  
“ And woe to those with whom we close in mortal fight.

## XIII.

“ But that we may our recent shame efface,  
“ Take not with thee the kings. Was it not they  
“ Who led us to the hills, and brought disgrace  
“ On Syria's arms, and lost our host the day ?  
“ Lead thou, thyself, our host ; for we obey  
“ With pride our king. Do thou now wisely place,  
“ In their stead whom thou thus shalt put away,  
“ Captains who never yet have turned their face  
“ From any foe ; so we our enemies will chase,

## XIV.

“As winds chase thistle-seeds o’er fen and moor,  
“Till rain-drops, which the thunder-clouds have nursed,  
“Strike them to earth. Yes, thou shalt see us pour  
“Our fury upon those who us dispersed,  
“If thou wilt take an army like the first ;  
“For we an easy vict’ry shall obtain :—  
“Our foes will once more from Samaria burst,  
“And we will meet them on Esdrælon’s plain,  
“Then smite them so that they shall never rise again.”

## XV.

This counsel, by the king was not rejected ;  
And ere the close of that eventful year,  
He, horse for horse and man for man, collected,  
Like as at first, and even spear for spear.  
The Syrians marched to Aphek ; and, when near,  
The Israelites went forth to war again,  
And pitched their camps before them, void of fear  
Though but like two small flocks of kids ; while vain  
And boastful Syria’s host filled all Esdrælon’s plain.

## XVI.

Now while Benhadad was the field surveying,  
And ordering the battle's stern array ;  
There came a man of God to Ahab, saying ;—  
“ Thus saith the Lord,—‘ Because the Syrians say  
“ ‘ My sceptre hath not universal sway,  
“ ‘ I give their mighty host into thy hand ;  
“ ‘ That ye may know (nor only ye, but they)  
“ ‘ That I am God ; and that my wide command  
“ ‘ Sweeps o’er the world, and none my pow’r can e’er withstand.’ ”

## XVII.

As thunder-clouds concentrate all their ire,  
For deadly conflict o’er the darkened plain,  
Then, drawing suddenly their swords of fire,  
Pour each the other's life's-blood down like rain ;  
So did those armies, menacing, remain ;  
And mutt’ring thunders caught the oaths they swore,  
As, lightning-like, their bright swords flashed again ;  
Then far the earth rang with the battle's roar,  
And all Esdrælon's plain was red with human gore.

## XVIII.

One hundred thousand of the Syrians there  
Were slain ; and Israel, with frantic yell,  
Pursued the flying host to Aphek ; where  
A wall on sev'n-and-twenty-thousand fell  
And crushed them 'neath its ruins. Deepest hell  
Echoed with laughter, and with mad delight,  
As Satan's minions rushing came to tell,  
With fiendish joy, the horrors of that sight,  
And all the woes of war which tracked the Syrians' flight.

## XIX.

Benhadad fled with fear into the city,  
And there his servants came to him and said ;—  
“ Have we not heard that kindness and pity  
“ Are shown by Israel's kings ? Then let us tread  
“ Their courts, each man with ashes on his head,  
“ A rope around his neck, and sackcloth o'er  
“ His loins ; and, low before him whom we dread,  
“ We'll bow ourselves and earnestly implore  
“ Thy life, O king ! that thou o'er Syria reign once more.”

## XX.

He heeded not their words ; his gloomy brow  
Despondingly upon his hands he leant ;  
His abject misery proclaiming how  
The Cedar of Mount Lebanon had bent  
Before the storm. " His silence gives consent !"—  
Thus spake those Syrian princes to each other ;  
And sad, yet hopeful, they to Ahab went ;  
Who answered thus, nor strove his joy to smother ;—  
" Benhadad ! Is he still alive ? He is my brother."

## XXI.

They caught the word and echoed it again ;—  
" Thy brother, king Benhadad." Then said he ;—  
" Seeing your sov'reign 's not among the slain ;  
" Go ye, and bring him quickly unto me."  
He came ; and Ahab said ;—" I welcome thee,  
" Benhadad ! mount my chariot ; and now,  
" As to thy conqueror's indemnity,  
" And to the terms of peace ; what sayest thou ?  
" Thy life is spared ; art thou prepared to pay for life ; and how ?"



## XXII.

Benhadad answered him ;—" I will restore  
" The cities which my father took from thine ;  
" And streets, like those my father built of yore  
" Within thy kingdom, thou shalt build in mine ;  
" So shall the fame of this thy vict'ry shine  
" With lustre throughout Syria for aye."  
" Enough !" said Ahab ; " then be this the sign  
" Of covenant 'twixt thee and me this day ;—  
" I take thy hand " ;—and so he sent his foe away.

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## XXIII.

Ahab returned ;—his fiery coursers prancing,  
And heralds loudly trumpeting his fame ;  
While white-robed damsels, to glad music dancing,  
Strewed flow'rs before him as he onward came.  
Samaria welcomed him with loud acclaim ;  
And, from her battlements, were banners flying,  
With " Victory " emblazoned o'er his name.—  
But ah ! in many a home around were lying,  
Wept o'er by broken hearts of love, the dead and dying !

## XXIV.

And some upon the battle-field were left,  
To be devoured by dogs and birds of prey.  
See ! there lies one whose helmet has been cleft,  
Yet still he lives, and strives to scare away  
A vulture hov'ring o'er him. Mothers stray  
Over the field, seeking, among the dead,  
The loved and lost. One seeks an only son ;  
You hear a shriek ;— you turn ;—she clasps her head,  
A raving maniac ;—reason's spark has fled !  
Her boy is found ;—but war its work has done ;—  
A Syrian spear is through his body run !  
Oh ! next to victory lost, the worst is victory won.

END OF FIFTH CANTO.



## Canto Sixth.

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"Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee!"—ISAIAH xxxiii, 1.

## I.

A PROPHET, unto Ahab said;—"Thus saith  
"The Lord of Hosts:—'Because thou hast let go  
"A man whom I appointed unto death;  
"E'en him whose dire ambition caused to flow  
"The orphans' blood, and widows' tears of woe;  
"Thy life instead of *his* life shall be taken!'"  
Ahab, instead of humbly bowing low  
Before that God whom he had long forsaken,  
Turned haughtily away; his pride of heart unshaken.

## II.

'Tis said that whoso hardeneth his heart  
Shall into evil ruinously fall.  
God's Spirit, long resisted, will depart ;  
For why in vain should that Great Spirit call ?—  
There was in Jezreel, by the palace wall,  
The vineyard of a good and worthy man  
Whose name was Naboth. Well beloved by all  
And blessed by God, he prospered in each plan ;  
And o'er the palace wall his rich vines clust'ring ran.

## III.

Sin made King Ahab's heart and conscience harden,  
Till, tempted by the luscious clusters red,  
He coveted the vineyard for a garden,  
And thus to ruin, step by step was led.  
To Naboth, owner of the land, he said ;—  
“ Sell me thy vineyard ; or, I'll give to thee  
“ Another, even better, in its stead.”  
“ But Naboth answered ;—“ God forbiddeth me  
“ To alienate the vineyard from my family.”

## IV.

The king, enraged to find his scheme was thwarted,  
Was more so still to find that Naboth fought  
And conquered by the Law ; for he supported  
His firm refusal, with a reason brought  
From the divine commandments. Ahab sought  
His chamber ; where, upon his ivory bed,  
To perfect helplessness by passion wrought,  
He threw himself and turned away his head,  
Refusing food, nor heeding aught his courtiers said.

## V.

But Ahab's mood was not explosive rage,  
'Twas sullen wrath, on dire revenge intent.  
Not the bold lion bristling to engage  
His foe would, fitly, Ahab represent ;  
Better the tiger, with his eyes down bent,  
Crouching to make more certain of his prey.  
Seeing his mood, the watchful arch-fiend went  
To Jezebel, and prompted her to play  
The subtle tempter's part, and boldly point the way.

## VI.

She came inquiring ;—" Why that gloomy brow ?  
" And wherefore is it thou dost eat no bread ?"  
He answered her ;—" Because I spoke just now  
" To Naboth, that mad Jezreelite, and said,  
" ' Give me thy vineyard, for I wish to spread  
" ' The bound'ry of my lands ; and thou shalt be  
" ' Repaid its worth ; or, if thou wilt instead,  
" ' I'll give a vineyard better far ;'—but he  
" Replied,—' I will not give my vineyard unto thee.'"

## VII.

Then Jezebel, his wife, said ;—" Dost not thou  
" O'er all this mighty realm the sceptre wield ?  
" Arise ! and eat ; nor let thy spirit bow  
" Because a base fanatic will not yield !  
" *I* will give thee possession of the field ;"  
And, not a moment for his answer staying,  
She wrote, in his name, letters ; and she sealed  
The letters with his seal ; by them conveying  
Unto the nobles (so called) Naboth's sad doom ; saying,—

## VIII.

"Proclaim a fast ; and Naboth set on high  
"Among the people ; and before him bring  
"Two men of Belial to testify  
"On oath,—'Thou didst blaspheme thy God and king.'  
"Then lead him forth ; and though his wife should fling  
"Herself before you, begging you to spare  
"His life ; and though his little ones should cling  
"Around your knees, and weeping urge their pray'r ;  
"Yet still perform your duty ;—or their doom ye share !"

## IX.

Poor Naboth ! See, they hurry him away.—  
Ah, hark ! the stones are show'ring on his head.  
His wife and little ones ; oh ! where are they ?  
There, too !—They came entreating that instead  
Of Naboth, they might die ; and fiends there shed  
The life's-blood of them all ! O Righteous Lord,  
The Loving One ! have Thy compassions fled,  
That Thou dost suffer wretches to reward  
Thy servants thus ? Why, in its scabbard, rests Thy sword ?



## X.

'Tis well for us, that God does suffer long ;  
And, for repentance giving time, forbears  
To draw the sword in punishment of wrong,  
That man may sue for pardon while grace spares.  
But when he spurns that grace and boldly dares  
Heav'n's righteous judgments ; God's arm, being freed  
From love's restraint, for His "strange work " prepares ;  
And then the sword of wrath, with lightning-speed,  
Comes down in vengeance dire ; and none may intercede.

## XI.

The murderers sent word,—“The deed is done !”—  
A deed at which e'en hell might blush with shame ;  
But Jezebel, rejoicing, said,—“There's none  
“Remains alive of Naboth's house or name ;—  
“Himself, wife, children, all have gone ; now claim  
“His goodly lands, O king !” Then this command  
From Heav'n unto Jehovah's prophet came ;—  
“Go quickly to Samaria, and withstand  
“The claim of Israel's king to martyred Naboth's land.

## XII.

"And say to Ahab,—'Dost thou take possession,

"'Thou murderer ! nor fearest wrath divine ?

"'Thus saith the Lord ;—For this, thy foul transgression,

"'Where thou didst Naboth to the dogs consign,

"'The dogs shall lick up *thy* blood, even thine.'"—

"Ha ! hast thou found me, O mine enemy ?"

Said Ahab ; and his scowl was most malign

When thus addressed ; for not alone was he ;—

Jehu and Bidkar then were in his company.

## XIII.

"I *have*," replied Elijah, "seeing thou

"Hast sold thyself to sin ; but list to me ;

"And hear thou what Jehovah sayeth now ;—

"'I surely will bring evil upon thee,

"'And take away all thy posterity ;

"'And from thy house will cut off ev'ry son ;

"'And like to Jeroboam's it shall be,

"'And Baasha's ;—its course shall soon be run ;

"'For I will make an end when once I have begun ;

## XIV.

“ ‘ And evil shall pursue thee to the tomb ;  
“ ‘ And, in its fell pow’r, Jezebel enthrall ;  
“ ‘ For Naboth’s fate shall be her righteous doom ;—  
“ ‘ The dogs shall eat her by the palace wall !  
“ ‘ Thine offspring in the cities, too ; they all,  
“ ‘ Dying by violence or slow decay,  
“ ‘ Shall be devoured by dogs ; and those who fall  
“ ‘ Dead in the open field, the birds of prey  
“ ‘ Shall feast on, and none care to frighten them away.’ ”

## XV.

When Ahab heard these words, he rent his clothes ;  
And put on sackcloth ; and, with bitter cry,  
As from a heart which e’en its beatings loathes,  
Fell to the earth, and lay in ashes, nigh  
Unto the royal palace. From on high  
Then came this word ;—“ Because his tears betoken  
“ Sincere repentance, I will pass him by ;—  
“ The sceptre shall not in *his* days be broken ;  
“ But in his wicked children’s days.—The word is spoken !”

END OF SIXTH CANTO.

## Canto Seventh.



"Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden, which were cut down out of time?"—JOB xxii, 15, 16.

## I.

THE proud ambition Ahab's heart had nourished,  
Though checked awhile by words Elijah spoke,  
Revived once more, and soon in vigour flourished ;  
E'en as in spring revives the giant oak  
To brave the storms and dare the lightning's stroke.  
That lightning's stroke from Heav'n, in judgment fell,  
And God's dread thunder over Israel broke ;  
And Ahab died, his sons, and Jezebel.  
The manner, time, and place,—'tis now my task to tell.

## II.

A royal feast was in Samaria holden,  
And king Jehoshaphat was there a guest ;  
With many a noble in his armour golden ;  
And many a maiden in embroidered vest ;  
And mirth and music banished thoughts of rest.  
The air was laden with the scent of flow'rs ;  
And Ahab said, to some who had expressed  
Loud praises of the balm of Gilead's bow'rs,  
"Have ye forgotten, Sirs, that Ramoth Gilead 's ours ?

## III.

"And rest we still, and take it not again ?  
"That gem of beauty which the Syrians tore  
"From out our diadem and would retain  
"Although Benhadad to your monarch swore  
"That all the cities which, in days of yore,  
"The Syrians took, the Syrians should resign.  
"To arms ! To arms ! War's trumpet sound once more.  
"Jehoshaphat, join thou thy hosts with mine."—  
"I am as thou art," answered he, "my hosts as thine ;

## IV.

"But let us first ask counsel of the Lord."  
So Ahab called a conclave, then and there,  
Of Baal's priests, and said ;—"Unto the sword  
"Shall we appeal ; or, say, shall we forbear ?"  
Those fawning sycophants, whose only care  
Was how to flatter Israel's king, replied ;—  
"Appeal to arms, for all the gods declare  
"Thy cause is just, and justice shall decide  
"That Ramoth Gilead's thine."—But, ah ! those priests ; they lied ;

## V.

And king Jehoshaphat said ;—"Is there not  
"A prophet of the Lord, besides, of whom  
"We might inquire ?" A thrill of terror shot  
Through Ahab's heart ; and o'er his face a gloom  
And pallor spread, as deathly as the tomb,  
While thus he spake ;—"There is one whom I know,—  
"Micaiah, son of Imlah ; but the doom,  
"Which he predicts, is ever one of woe."  
Jehoshaphat replied ;—"Let not my friend say so."

## VI.

There was another whom king Ahab knew ;  
And why he named not him we well can guess. —  
The recollection of him wildly flew  
Through Ahab's heart, and made his face confess  
His conscious fear ; but, with well-timed address,  
Resolving to avoid that mighty seer,  
He quickly named one whom he feared much less ;  
And said unto a eunuch standing near ;—  
“ Go, and Micaiah, son of Imlah, summon here.”

## VII.

Now Israel's king, and also Judah's king,  
Arrayed in their imperial robes of state,  
Were seated in the spacious opening,  
Or court of justice, by Samaria's gate ;  
And while they for Micaiah there did wait,  
The priests of Baal came and took their stand  
Before their king, and said ;—“ Thy pow'r is great,  
“ Thy cause is good ; and thus the gods command ;—  
“ Go up ; and Ramoth Gilead shall fall into thy hand.”

## VIII.

The messenger, to good Micaiah went,  
And told him how that all the prophets stood  
Before the king ; and all, with one consent,  
Predicted good to him. " And now I would,"  
He said, " that also thou should'st speak of good,  
" Lest Ahab upon thee his vengeance wreak."—  
" And think'st thou, eunuch," said he, " that I could  
" Disown my God ! Nay, I am not so weak.  
" Those words which He commands ; those only will I speak."

## IX.

So answered good Micaiah ; and he came  
Into the royal presence, and drew near  
Unto the king, who, calling him by name,  
Said ;—" Tell me, by the God whom thou dost fear,  
" Shall we 'gainst Ramoth Gilead lift the spear,  
" Or shall we not ; what does thy God command ? "  
" Go up ", Micaiah said, with scorn severe,  
" As these advise, who round about thee stand ;  
" And Ramoth Gilead falls at once into thy hand."



## X.

Now Ahab would indeed have been most glad  
To follow the advice which met his ear ;  
If good Micaiah's scornful bearing had  
Not plainly told Jehoshaphat, then near,  
That what he heard was not advice sincere,  
But only stern and with'ring irony.  
So Ahab said, as if he held truth dear,  
" Again must I demand the truth of thee ?"—  
How strange, that men should summon one whose face they fear  
to see !

## XI.

Micaiah, towards king Ahab, manifested  
Most bitter scorn ;—indignant at his lying.  
Murmurs arose ; but those the seer arrested  
With one wave of his hand ; and thus replying  
Announced king Ahab's doom ;—" The winds were sighing  
" With wild, sepulchral and regretful moan  
" Over the hills, whereon the dead and dying  
" Of Israel's sons were scattered ; and the tone  
" Was as if Heav'n had caught, and echoed back, earth's groan ;

## XII.

“For, cruel war had swept o’er earth again,  
“And loving hearts were weeping o’er the dead.  
“But he who caused the slaying, there was slain ;  
“And with his blood the tongues of dogs were red ;  
“While Israel afar were scatteréd  
“As sheep without a shepherd ; for there he  
“Whose sheep they were had fall’n !” Then Ahab said  
To Judah’s king ;—“Was not my word to thee,  
“That he would prophesy no good concerning me ?”

## XIII.

Micaiah heeded not the scornful tone  
Of Ahab’s words ; but wrapped his mantle round,  
And said ;—“I saw Jehovah on His throne ;  
“And angels bright came near with awe profound ;  
“And He to them this question did propound ;—  
“‘Who shall persuade king Ahab that he go  
“‘To war, and perish on the battle-ground  
“‘At Ramoth Gilead ?’ Then, bowing low,  
“Many their service offered ; but God answered,—‘No.’

## XIV.

“ At last a spirit from the realms of night,  
“ With clouds of thunder round his gloomy brow,  
“ Approached the throne of ever-dazzling light,  
“ And boldly offered ; and God asked him ;—‘ How  
“ ‘ Wilt thou persuade the king ? ’—‘ Ahab will bow  
“ ‘ To priests ; and I,’ said he, ‘ will in them all  
“ ‘ A lying spirit be.’—God answered,—‘ Thou  
“ ‘ Shalt go ; and none thy mission shall recall ;  
“ ‘ Falsehood king Ahab loves ; by falsehood let him fall.’ ”

## XV.

Micaiah bid the king then not believe  
The prophets ; “ for,” said he, “ there has been sent  
“ A lying one among them to deceive.”  
Then Zedekiah, ever violent,  
Struck good Micaiah ; saying,—“ Which way went  
“ That lying one from me to speak to thee ? ”  
He answered,—“ When thou, in bewilderment  
“ And terror, shalt into thy chamber flee,  
“ O proud son of Chenaanah, thou then shalt see.”

## XVI.

Then Ahab, to his officers, said,—“Lay  
“Ye hands upon Micaiah, and convey  
“Him unto Amon and to Joash ; they  
“Shall rule while I’m in Syria ; and say ;—  
“‘Imprison ye this fellow till the day  
“‘The king returns to sheath in peace his sword.’”  
But good Micaiah said when led away ;—  
“If thou return at all in peace, the Lord  
“Speaks not by me. Ho ! men ; do ye my words record.”

## XVII.

Then far and near was sounded through the coasts  
Of Israel the battle-cry, “To arms !”  
And thousands flocked to swell the mighty hosts  
Which gathered there to scatter war’s alarms  
Through happy peaceful homes, where woman’s charms,  
And tott’ring age, and helpless infancy  
Would fall a sacrifice, that vict’ry’s palms  
Might wave above the conquerors. Ah, me !  
That men should glory in each other’s misery.

## XVIII.

The armies met at Gilead ; and there  
King Ahab heard a prisoner relate  
That Syria's king had made his captains swear  
That they would fight with neither small nor great  
Save with the object of his mortal hate,—  
Ahab himself. He told not this ; but said  
To Judah's king ;—" Put on thy robes of state ;  
" And take the post of honour in my stead ;  
" And I and mine will be by thee to victory led."

## XIX.

Thus with base treachery did he pretend  
The highest honour to his friend to show,  
In order to draw down upon that friend  
The cruel wrath of an enraged foe ;  
And so himself escape death's threatened blow.  
And nearly did the stratagem succeed ;  
But there is One, whose eyes no slumber know :  
He saw the treacherously selfish deed,  
And righteously, and graciously, He otherwise decreed.

## XX.

As swiftly as an avalanche of snow,  
By lightest wind from mountain summit freed,  
Comes thund'ring down into the vale below,  
With force not even forests can impede ;  
So came those captains ; each on milk-white steed,  
The foam from off whose flanks in flakes was flying ;  
So furious and headlong was their speed  
As on they rushed, the sword and spear defying.—  
Beneath them fell their foes ;—behind them groaned the dying.

## XXI.

Not that those captains fought with those who fell ;  
With none they fought ; but as they onward dashed  
With whirlwind speed, and with terrific yell,  
They drew their swords,—a moment, high they flashed,  
Then 'neath each blow, fell some proud foe, headless or  
gashed.—  
'Twas like as when in boyhood's reckless hours,  
With switch in hand, on right and left we slashed,  
And, in the wildness of our life's young pow'rs,  
Struck down in very wantonness the wayside flow'rs.

## XXII.

Jehoshaphat, who led the hosts to war,  
Being arrayed in gorgeous robes of state,  
Was, by those Syrians, mistaken for  
The object of their monarch's deadly hate.  
They, having vowed that not with small nor great  
Save only with king Ahab would they fight,  
Dashed at Jehoshaphat, confederate  
To take him ; but he met them in their might ;  
And proud his eye, and this his cry,—“ Now God defend the  
“ right !”

## XXIII.

But, being pressed by numbers, he retreated ;  
Yet battled still, and still his foes defied.  
Never had he known fear nor been defeated ;—  
Never from face of foe turned he aside.  
“ Now yield thee, Ahab, yield !”—at length they cried ;  
“ Or we will stretch thee lifeless on the field,  
“ By one united blow.” But he replied,—  
“ I am not Ahab ; neither will I yield  
“ While yet this well-skilled arm my trusty sword can wield.”

## XXIV.

Their bright Damascus blades in sunlight flashing,  
While, in retreat, Jehoshaphat contended,  
Were suddenly arrested ere in crashing  
Death-blows upon his helmet they descended.  
Unconsciously his bold words had defended  
The valiant life he seemed to throw away ;  
For, when those Syrian captains apprehended  
The truth, that he was not king Ahab, they,  
Their oath rememb'ring, turned elsewhere to seek their prey.

## XXV.

How then, with Ahab, fared it in the fray ?  
Did he escape the doom predicted ? No.  
There's no escape when called by God away :  
Willing or not, at his word we must go ;  
And ere the sun had set king Ahab found it so :  
Disguised he was, but 'twas of no avail ;—  
A certain man at venture drew a bow ;  
And He, whose purposes can never fail,  
Made that chance arrow pierce king Ahab's coat of mail.



## XXVI.

He, sinking, said unto his charioteer,  
"Turn thou thy hand, and bear me from the host,  
"For I am wounded and would reach the rear."  
'Twas vain ; he could not from that fatal post  
Escape, for there the battle raged the most.  
Dread thunders pealed, as if his cries to drown ;  
And black clouds, while he yielded up the ghost,  
Darkened the heav'ns as with a fearful frown ;  
And Ahab died at ev'ning, when the sun went down.

## XXVII.

Soon shone the stars in triumph o'er the scene ;  
Soon rose the moon and filled the world with light ;  
Joyous as if some cloud that rolled between  
The heav'ns and earth, had vanished from her sight.  
Still fiercely fought those hosts in armour bright ;  
But when 'twas known that Ahab was no more,  
Shrilly the trumpets bade them cease the fight :  
And Ahab's corpse, all welt'ring in its gore,  
The Israelites away unto Samaria bore.

## XXVIII.

Thus perished Ahab ; and no eyes were dim  
With grief that he o'er Israel ceased to rule.  
It might indeed be truly said of him ;  
That although taught in Wisdom's highest school,—  
Prophets, his teachers ;—yet he died a fool !  
Into his chariot his life's warm flood  
Poured its full tide ; and in Samaria's pool  
They washed it out ; while, from the sick'ning mud,  
The prowling rav'nous dogs licked up his clotted blood.

END OF SEVENTH CANTO.



## Canto Eighth.

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"Hearken unto me, ye men of understanding: Far be it from God, that He should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that He should commit iniquity. For the work of a man shall He render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways."—JOB xxxiv, 10, 11.

## I.

To Ahab's throne king Ahab's son succeeded;  
And such as was his father, such was he;  
The threatenings of God he little heeded;  
Yet crouched, a slave to base idolatry.  
Fearing where no fear was, he lived to be  
Despised by those who once bowed 'neath his sway.—  
The Moabites from his authority  
Broke, like a flood that sweepeth all away,  
And laughed at those who strove their freedom's course to  
stay.

## II.

Conciliation, Israel tried not, for,  
Entreaty was revolting to their pride.  
Nor went their vain weak monarch to the war,  
To try by force to stem rebellion's tide.  
No ; fearing death, he stayed at home,—yet died.  
Ah ! there are dangers quite as great as those  
Which in fell war the fate of men decide.  
What is thy duty ? Do thou that.—God knows  
Where it is best that thou thy mortal life shouldst close.

## III.

Now while the men of Israel took the field,  
To crush the pow'r that in rebellion rose ;  
The King, instead of going forth to wield  
The sword against his people's deadly foes,  
And lead his warriors to vict'ry ; chose  
To act the part of coward, and of slave  
To sensuality ;—he sought repose !—  
God oft, in *judgment*, gives men what they crave ;  
And slumber, God gave him ;—but slumber in the grave.

## IV.

Lounging in listless idleness, he fell  
Through open casement from an upper room ;  
And in his agony, most sad to tell,  
Sent messengers to Baalzebub ; whom  
They should consult as to their monarch's doom,  
And bring him word again. Alas, that he  
Should seek from stones the secrets of the tomb !  
But men who have not faith in God, will be  
Ever the simplest dupes of weak credulity.

## V.

Unto Elijah, then, from Heav'n was sent  
An angel of Jehovah, thus to say ;—  
“ Go meet Samaria's messengers that went  
“ From Israel's king ; behold they're in the way  
“ That leads to Ekron. Say thou to them, ‘ Stay !  
“ ‘ Return, and to your monarch instantly  
“ ‘ This message from the King of kings convey ;—  
“ ‘ Because My chastisements thou wilt not see,  
“ ‘ But boldly dost proclaim thy disbelief in Me

## VI.

“ ‘ By thus to Baal in thy trouble crying ;  
“ ‘ Know that most certainly from off that bed,  
“ ‘ Where thou in mortal agony art lying,  
“ ‘ Rise, thou shalt not, until thy soul hath fled,  
“ ‘ And thou, O king, art numbered with the dead.’ ”

Then went Elijah down to them, and stated  
What God had, by His angel, to him said ;  
And they returned, and to the king related  
The solemn word that they had heard, and his commands awaited.

## VII.

Then, when he understood why they returned  
Ere reaching Ekron, his exhausted frame  
Was so convulsed by rage, that fever burned  
His brain almost to madness ; and the flame  
Of fury fired his eyes till they became  
Wild with demoniac brightness, as he cried ;—  
“ Who was the man that met you ; what his name ?  
“ By all the gods whom he has thus defied,  
“ Earth with his curséd life’s-blood shall this day be dyed.”

## VIII.

They said,—“ He was of venerable age ;  
“ His garment goats’ skins ; around which he wore  
“ A leathern belt.” “ By Baal ! ’tis the sage  
“ Elijah !” said the king. “ In days of yore  
“ He troubled Israel, and now, once more,  
“ He comes with daring menaces, and lies !  
“ By all the gods of Israel ! as I swore,  
“ So shall it be ;—this very day he dies ;  
“ And we will see if that shall be, of which he prophesies.”

## IX.

A captain, with his fifty, then was sent  
To seize the seer and quickly bring him bound  
Before the king. Like hounds of hell they went,  
Yelling most horrid curses, and soon found  
The prophet on the steeply rising ground  
Outside the walls ; and said with virulence  
Of hatred, and a bitter scorn that crowned  
With tenfold aggravation their offence ;—  
“ Thou man of God, thus saith the king, ‘ Come down from  
“ ‘ thence.’ ”



## X.

“If, that I am a man of God, be true”,  
He said, “let lightning scath you with its flame” ;  
And swift from heav’n God’s vengeful lightning flew ;  
And such its deadly and unerring aim,  
That instantly the company became  
A heap of blackened corpses. Then the king,  
Enraged, sent others ; but, alas, the same  
Dread fate, upon themselves, did they, too, bring ;  
And lo ! one hundred bodies there lay smouldering.

## XI.

When this to Israel’s monarch was made known,  
He foamed with fury. What ! Should he be thwarted ;  
Never !—By Baal and his fiery throne,  
The sun, and by the clouds which him escorted,  
He swore that though all earth and Heav’n consorted  
With that intent, no force his arm should stay :  
And, with a countenance by rage distorted,  
He looked around, and scowling seemed to say ;  
“Woe to that man who dares my word to disobey.”

## XII.

Dread orders from his quiv'ring lips then burst,  
As bursts the thunder from volcano, rent  
By fiercely raging fires which it has nursed  
E'en to explosiveness ; and forth he sent  
Command for fifty more. They, with their captain, went,  
The wrathful message of their king conveying ;  
But, wiser for the past, these humbly bent  
Before Elijah, and besought him ; saying,  
" O man of God, thy servants come before thee praying

## XIII.

" That their lives may be precious in thy sight.  
" Behold, from heav'n there came down lightning slaying  
" The former fifties with their captains ; smite  
" Not us we pray thee, who are but obeying  
" The king's command." An angel then, arraying  
Himself in form invisible, drew near ;  
And, only by his gracious words betraying  
His presence, said unto the mighty seer,—  
" Hail ! man of God. Go down ; and at the court appear."

## XIV.

Then to the king of Israel he went ;  
And in his presence boldly standing, said ;—  
“ Because thou hast to Baalzebub sent  
“ To ask his aid ; and lo ! encouraged  
“ By thy example, Israel is led  
“ To plunge more deeply into sin ; the High  
“ And Mighty One hath sworn,—‘ From off that bed,  
“ ‘ Where thou in all that agony dost lie,  
“ ‘ Thou shalt not rise again, but there shalt surely die.’ ”

## XV.

He would have answered, but the hand of death  
Locked up his jaws ;—a blasphemy half uttered  
Died on his lips ; and, with his failing breath,  
The name of Jezebel he feebly muttered ;  
Then, like a taper which the blast has guttered,  
He quickly wasted till the waning light  
Of life within him, in its socket fluttered ;  
And Heav’n’s recording angel took its flight,  
Leaving the ruined soul in everlasting night.

END OF EIGHTH CANTO.

## Canto Ninth.

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"And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God, Remove the diadem, and take off the crown."—EZEKIEL xxi, 25, 26.

## I.

THUS Ahab's first-born died ; and many a one  
More freely breathed, when *he* drew breath no more.  
All feared him while he lived ; and there was none  
That thanked not God his cruel life was o'er.  
Yes, such the hateful character he bore,  
None loved him living, and none mourned him dead  
When Death, with rude hand, from that stern brow tore  
The crown which might have graced the monarch's head ;  
And, as he childless died, his brother reigned instead.

## II.

In Judah's palace, too, Death's hand had been ;  
And good Jehoshaphat in peace had died,  
Bequeathing that his younger sons, between  
Themselves, should all his stores of wealth divide ;  
While to his first-born, once his joy and pride,  
He gave the kingdom. But, alas ! that son  
The hopeful promise of his youth belied,  
By madly giving heart and hand to one  
Whom all the wise and good had warned him well, to shun.

## III.

The wily Jezebel entrapped the prince ;  
And for her daughter thus secured a throne ;  
Nor failed that daughter's spirit to evince  
Under whose eye it was that she had grown  
To womanhood. Example oft has sown  
The seeds of sin ; but here was teaching brought  
Into conjunction with example, known  
To be for evil ; and the soul was caught ;  
And Jezebel, her child Athaliah's ruin wrought.

## IV.

Over that bud, which in life's spring-time grew,  
A thing of beauty in that sunny clime,  
Drinking in joy, as sweet flow'rs drink the dew,  
Queen Jezebel soon trailed the deadly slime'  
Of her most foul example ; and in time  
That bud became a withered, blighted thing.—  
Athaliah's heart, familiar long with crime,  
Shrank not from any deed which seemed to bring  
Promise of present gain to her and to the king.

## V.

And now was done a deed for execration ;  
A fratricidal deed of blackest guilt.  
The king of Judah, at the instigation  
Of Jezebel and queen Athaliah, spilt  
The life's-blood of his brothers !—to the hilt  
Sheathing the murd'rous sword in each young breast,  
From lust of gold. Alas ! his heart had built  
Itself a palace with *their* wealth ;—the rest  
Followed, as follows crime when lust becomes a guest.

## VI.

That which at first was but an idle thought,  
Became, by being cherished, sin's beginnings  
O be thou watchful ; and ne'er think it naught  
To entertain the mere idea of sinning.  
The heart is soon enticed ; and lust is winning ;  
And, if sin be not hated, thou wilt find  
Its slender threads of thought thy brain was spinning  
Have twined themselves into a cord, and bind  
Thee hand and foot ; and never, but by God, can be untwined.

## VII.

There's not a thought that passes through the brain ;  
There's not a deed however darkly done ;  
There's not the smallest drop of falling rain ;  
Or veriest atom hid from noonday sun,  
But is observed by the Omniscient One.  
We cannot turn His piercing glance aside ;  
We cannot its all-seeing brightness shun ;  
Nor from God's wrath could king Jehoram hide,  
When, by his murd'rous hands, his six young brothers died.

## VIII.

A runner stands before the city walls,  
And summons, to the massive brazen gates,  
The guard on watch ; he, answ'ring him who calls,  
Demands why so impatiently he waits ;  
And he, replying, thus his mission states ;—  
“These pond'rous portals, quickly open fling ;  
“I bear a secret message which relates  
“To matters of great moment to the king ;  
“Do thou me instantly into his presence bring.”

## IX.

'Tis done ; before Jehoram now he stands ;  
And boldly, yet with reverence, draws near,  
Deliv'ring into those blood-guilty hands  
A writing from Elijah. With severe  
And haughty mien, albeit pale with fear,  
The trembling monarch takes the scroll and reads.—  
“Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, into whose ear  
“The cry of blood has come,—‘Justice impleads  
“‘Thee, and calls out for vengeance for thy cruel deeds.



## X.

“ ‘Thy father walked before me ; he is dead,  
“ ‘And now in Heav’n receives his bright reward ;  
“ ‘And thou art risen in thy father’s stead,  
“ ‘And walkest earth, a thing accursed, abhorred.  
“ ‘Perish the pow’r that governs by the sword !  
“ ‘Because thou hadst no pity, but didst slay  
“ ‘Thy little brothers ; this know from the Lord,—  
“ ‘Disease shall seize thy bowels until they  
“ ‘Fall out, by reason of thy sickness, day by day.’ ”

## XI.

He tried to smile, but fear retained its place,  
And stamped its image on his features still ;  
For, ev’ry muscle of that ghastly face  
Rebelled against the motions of his will.  
Ill was the monarch’s heart at ease ; and ill  
Concealed he it, though with defiant tone  
He said,—“ No threats shall *me* with terror fill.  
“ Life is a bubble by some chance breath blown ;  
“ And death,—that bubble’s bursting.—Nothing more is known.”

## XII.

He sent the messenger away, and strove  
The message to forget, but strove in vain ;—  
Where'er he was ; in citadel, or grove ;  
Upon the throne, or on the tented plain ;  
The prophet's message oft and oft again  
Would mar his joys, and haunt his dreams by night.  
It was a burning fever in his brain ;—  
On all his hopes, a mildew and a blight ;—  
A blood-stained sword that ever flashed before his sight.

## XIII.

The gold which he by murder had acquired  
Brought not with it the joy which he had thought ;—  
Peace fled his conscience ; and his wealth soon fired  
The ambition of the Arab tribes, and brought  
The Philistines 'gainst Judah ; and they fought  
With king Jehoram, and him soon bereft  
Of wealth, and wives, and sons ; and sternly taught  
Him, God is just ;—their battle-axes cleft  
The skulls of all his children, save the youngest, whom they left.

## XIV.

And then God smote him with a dire disease  
Through which he lingered two long weary years  
In anguish and remorse, and by degrees  
Died, tortured with a thousand boding fears.  
Dread cries for vengeance ever filled his ears.—  
His murdered brothers' voices seemed to greet him,  
As he remembered their sad piteous tears  
When, for dear life, in vain did they entreat him ;  
And now their spectral forms seemed rising up to meet him.

## XV.

He passed away ;—a curtain falls and hides  
The dark unknown beyond, from human gaze ;  
And no one, who in mortal form abides,  
That all impenetrable veil can raise.  
Death, on the lips of the departed, lays  
His icy finger ; but thus much we know,—  
It is with all according to their ways ;  
We reap hereafter that which now we sow.  
Yes ! ever as the countless ages flow,  
Man's good or ill is followed still, by weal, or woe.

## XVI.

His youngest son was then made king ; the rest  
Having by ruthless murderers been slain  
When Philistines and Arabs, east and west,  
Invaded Judah in Jehoram's reign.  
The youthful monarch neither strove to gain  
Jehovah's favour, nor to know His laws ;  
Much less sought he the blessing to attain  
Of worshipping with love the First Great Cause ;  
He lived for earth alone ; his god, this world's applause.

## XVII.

Joining the house of Ahab in a war  
'Gainst Hazael king of Syria, he went  
With all his hosts to Ramoth Gilead ; for,  
His mother, to that ill-starred project, lent  
Her influence for evil ; and he bent  
Before her words, as a young sapling bends  
Before the blast which, through the firmament,  
The howling storm-fiend as his herald sends,  
Ere with his lightnings he the oak asunder rends.

## XVIII.

'Round Ramoth Gilead rolled war's foaming tide,  
And loudly did the angry billows roar ;  
But she the fury of her foes defied,  
And hurled them back all broken as of yore.  
There Ahab, years ago, had in his gore  
Lain welt'ring when his life fast ebbed away :  
And now his son, too, there was wounded sore ;  
For Hazael, like a hunted beast of prey,  
Sprang from his savage lair, and kept his foes at bay,

## XIX.

Then Joram, king of Israel, returned  
To Jezreel from Mount Gilead, to be healed  
Of wasting fever which within him burned  
From those his wounds ; for although he was steeled  
In triple armour, 'twas a useless shield  
Against the subtle arrows of the foe :  
And, faint and feeble, he was forced to yield  
To Ahaziah's arguments and go,  
Leaving to him the task of laying Ramoth low.

## XX.

Long time the siege continued, but the king  
Of Israel returned not to the host ;  
Health by degrees he was recovering,  
But manly strength, of which he once could boast,  
He had not yet regained. Therefore his post  
King Ahaziah, in the war, resigned  
To certain captains whom he trusted most,  
And went to see king Joram who repined,  
A weary broken man, one crushed in heart and mind.

## XXI.

He, turning not in his all-cheerless grief  
To Him who only can sweet peace bestow,  
Found not the solace of that true relief  
Which springs from trusting God in time of woe.  
Alas ! alas !—when God doth love us so,  
And o'er us with a father's heart doth yearn,  
Entreating us to come to Him and know  
The riches of His grace ;—that we should turn  
Away in senseless pride and all His mercies spurn !

END OF NINTH CANTO.



## Canto Tenth.

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"As I live, saith the Lord God, I will prepare thee unto blood, and blood shall pursue thee: sith thou hast not hated blood, even blood shall pursue thee."—  
EZEKIEL XXXV, 6.

## I.

THERE is no limit to God's wondrous love  
As manifested towards His creature, man.  
'Tis patient, and it suffers long, above  
All human thought; and some, who blindly scan  
Only a *part* of God's all-righteous plan  
Of government, insist that love alone  
Is there. Yet, while admitting, as we can  
In truth, that God is love; we still must own  
That righteousness and judgment are before His throne;



## II.

And o'er that throne there is a rainbow bent,  
Which tells us, God is true ;—true equally  
In threat'nings and in promises. Repent,  
For God is merciful. Repent, for He  
Is just. He swore that the posterity  
Of Ahab should from earth be swept away,  
And Jezebel be cut off in her infamy :—  
And when He drew His glittering sword to slay,  
The queen, and priests, and princes, perished on that day.

## III.

Elijah to Elisha this word spake ;  
First telling what on Horeb he had heard ;—  
“ Command that, from the prophets' school, one take  
“ This box of oil, his flowing garment gird  
“ Around his loins ; and, by no fear deterred,  
“ Go boldly down unto the battle field,  
“ And there anoint, according to God's word,  
“ Jehu as king ; let him the sceptre wield ;  
“ Himself the sword of God, and God Himself his shield.”

## IV.

Unto the prophet's school Elisha then  
Went down, and, to a student there, thus spake ;  
"Go thou to Ramoth Gilead ; and when  
"Thou comest to the captains, thou shalt make  
"Jehu arise and follow thee. Him take  
"Into an inner chamber ; but with what  
"Intent, say not. This box of oil then break,  
"And there anoint him king ; then from the spot  
"Flee with thine utmost speed. Flee ! Flee ! and tarry not."

## V.

To Ramoth then the young man went, and found  
The captains of the host in council seated ;  
And, boldly entering, he looked around,  
And upon Jehu fixed his eyes, and greeted  
Him with the words Elisha had repeated,  
Saying, "I have a message unto thee."  
Then Jehu rose, and the young man retreated  
Into an inner room for secrecy,  
And Jehu said, "What is thy message unto me ?"

## VI.

He said, "Thus saith Jehovah, 'Be thou king  
" 'Over my people Israel ; and smite  
" 'Thy master to the earth, and swiftly bring  
" 'All Ahab's sons to death, and thus requite  
" 'The blood of martyred prophets. Let life's light  
" 'In Baal's priests, too, who adore the sun,  
" 'Be quenched in death and in eternal night.  
" 'They worship light, yet that of truth, they shun ;  
" 'Thus blackness of thick darkness for themselves have won.

## VII.

" 'And where dogs licked up Naboth's blood, e'en there  
" 'Shall Jezebel, in death's throes, clench her teeth,  
" 'While dogs, from off her bones, the flesh shall tear.'—  
" 'The cause is God's ; thou wearest valour's wreath ;  
" 'Draw then the sword of vengeance from its sheath !"  
Then poured he the oil on Jehu's head ;  
And, like one who has fired a mine beneath  
The very chamber where his footsteps tread,  
He open flung the door, and gat him out and fled.

## VIII.

Jehu awhile stood fixed as by a spell,  
And then returned and took again his seat.  
One there inquired of him if all was well ;  
And then said, " Ah ! what is this scent so sweet ?  
" This oil, too, on thy head, thy robe, thy feet ?  
" And what that madman's words ? " He answering,  
" Ye know his words ; why should I them repeat ? "  
They said, " 'Tis false ! now tell us of this thing."  
Then Jehu boldly said, " God doth anoint me king."

## IX.

At once each captain sprang up from his seat,  
And in enthusiastic gladness threw  
His flowing garment down at Jehu's feet  
In token of subjection ; and then flew  
Unto the open stair-top, and there blew  
The trumpets by which they were wont to bring  
The tribes together ; thus a concourse drew,  
Then cried, with shouts which made the city ring,  
" Jehu reigns over Israel ; God save the king."

## X.

Now Jehu was a man whose soul was fired  
With dauntless courage and with burning zeal ;  
And, to the captains who with him conspired,  
He said, " Since this is for the common weal,  
" Let none go forth to tell it in Jezreel  
" Until this righteous work shall be completed  
" By Joram's death. Silence must all lips seal ;—  
" No thought be uttered, and no word repeated  
" To any, lest our plans should haply be defeated."

## XI.

Then mounted he his chariot and rode  
With furious speed, as he did ever ride.—  
Afar, on Jezreel's tower, a watchman strode,—  
Turned,—stopped,—and shading then his eyes, espied  
The cavalcade of Jehu ; and he cried,  
" Behold, a company " ! King Joram, for  
He, too, had seen the cloud of dust, replied,  
" From Ramoth Gilead they're coming, or  
" Mine eyes deceive me ; and, with tidings of the war.

## XII.

“Send out a horseman ; bid him ride to meet  
“The approaching cavalcade, and thus inquire ;—  
“‘Is it with news of peace ye come to greet  
“‘My lord the king ; or bring ye tidings dire  
“‘Of heavy loss or of defeat ?’”—The fire,  
From prancing horses’ hoofs below, was flashing ;  
And, quick as was expressed the king’s desire,  
An Arab steed from out the gate was dashing,  
Proud of its rider as away it sped ;  
While he, as proud of it, caressed its noble head.

## XIII.

He met the approaching cavalcade, and there  
Reined in his steed, and wheeling round, inquired,  
As now with them he dashed along, “Say, bear  
“Ye news of glorious peace, so long desired ?”  
Jehu, who ’gainst the king’s life had conspired,  
Drew up his horse with quickly tightened rein,  
Scowled fiercely upon him whose words had fired  
His rage, and said, “Speak not of peace again !  
“‘War to the death’ ’s the cry now ; follow in my train.”

## XIV.

The sentinel on Jezreel's tower reported,—  
“He came to them, but cometh not again.”  
“Another send”, said Joram; and there snorted  
A noble steed which longed to paw the plain;  
His neck was curved in pride, and ev'ry vein  
In that sleek skin spoke of a mighty heart;  
And o'er his eye, so full, a jet-black mane  
Luxuriantly fell, but only to impart  
More brilliance to the rays which, through it, seemed to dart.

## XV.

Over his head his rider's seen to bow,  
Stroke his arched neck, and whisper in his ear.—  
Away, away he bears that rider now  
To meet the dreaded horsemen drawing near.  
Again the question, and again the clear  
Bold voice which orders that all words shall cease;  
And now the watchman, with a face of fear,  
Reports, “He, too, but serveth to increase  
“The company that comes. Can it indeed be peace?”

## XVI.

“The driving of the foremost seems to be  
“Like that of Jehu, the all-daring son  
“Of Nimshi, for he driveth furiously ;  
“And ill ’s behind when he’s the foremost one.”—  
“Make ready,—quick !” said Joram.—It was done.  
The kings then, each one in his chariot,  
Went forth ; and Jehu, never known to shun  
The face of any, met them in the plot  
Of ground that once formed part of martyred Naboth’s lot.

## XVII.

Fear-stricken Joram grasped his keen sword’s hilt  
And asked, “Is it peace, O captains true ?”  
“What peace,” said Jehu, “while thy mother’s guilt  
“Cries from this field to God ?” Then Joram knew  
His own and Ahaziah’s fate, and threw  
His hands up, and cried, “Treachery !” and fled.  
But Jehu, firm of purpose, swiftly drew  
A bow with his full strength ;—the arrow sped  
Straight to its destined mark, and Joram fell down dead.



## XVIII.

“ Drag him from out his chariot, and cast him  
“ Unto the rav’nous dogs and birds of prey”,  
Said Jehu unto Bidkar hurrying past him ;  
“ For dost thou not remember, on that day  
“ When thou and I together rode this way  
“ After his father, Ahab, God empow’red  
“ Elijah and commissioned him to say,  
“ “ Where stones on righteous Naboth’s head were show’red,  
“ “ There, by the fowls of heav’n, shall thy seed be devoured ! ” ”

## XIX.

When Ahaziah king of Judah saw  
The fatal arrow, and heard Joram’s scream  
Of death, instead of feeling roused to draw  
The sword of vengeance for his friend, ’twould seem  
He fled in terror across Kishon’s stream ;  
And Jehu to his bold companions cried,  
“ Follow and smite him ! ” and when near Ibleam,  
One with a javelin smote him in the side ;—  
Wounded, he fled unto Megiddo, and there died.

## XX.

When Jezebel, then staying at Jezreel,  
Heard in the palace all that had been done,  
She, proud to show how little she could feel  
Even the murder of the king, her son,  
Painted her eyes, and tired her head, like one  
Wholly regardless of her children's fate.  
No grief knew she, nor sought men's gaze to shun ;  
But, at an open window, sat in state,  
While dogs devoured her son before the palace gate !

## XXI.

Jehu then entering, she cried aloud,  
"Had Zimri peace, who erst his master slew ?"  
Jehu looked up, and in his spirit vowed,  
"Thou too shalt meet the death that is thy due !"  
"Who is on my side ?" cried he.—Bold and true  
Two or three eunuchs answered in a breath,  
"I," "I."—"Then throw her down here" ; and they threw  
Her swiftly down ; and sacred history saith  
That Jehu's foaming horses trampled her to death.

## XXII.

Then went he in to eat, but turned to say,  
“That curséd woman, being a king’s daughter,  
“See now and bury her.” They went their way,  
But came back quickly from that place of slaughter,  
And testified, with horror all unfeigned,  
That skull, and hands, and feet, alone of her remained !  
Upon the very spot where Naboth fell,  
There she, to wolf-like dogs, had fall’n a prey ;—  
Her flesh they ’d eaten ; and had dragged away  
Her bones into the fields ; and not a friend could pay  
Her even funeral honours, or could say,—  
“ Lo ! this is Jezebel.”

END OF TENTH CANTO.

## Canto Eleventh.

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"The destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed."—ISAIAH i, 28.

## I.

AHAB had in Samaria seventy sons ;  
And Jehu sent unto the elders who  
Had charge of them, a letter which thus runs ;—  
"Seeing there are your master's sons with you,  
"And horses, chariots, and armour too,  
"And a strong fenced city ; make it known  
"Whom ye anoint as king. This quickly do ;  
"And when ye thus your loyalty have shown,  
"Fight for your master's house, his kingdom and his throne."

## II.

Then were they all exceedingly afraid,  
And said, "Behold, two kings stood not before him ;  
" How then should we stand, even if we made  
" The mightiest prince amongst us ruler o'er him ?  
" He rules already ; let us not ignore him,  
" Nor dare so fierce a spirit to despise.  
" We'll make no king ; but, writing, thus implore him,—  
" ' O mighty Jehu, thou alone art wise ;  
" ' Thy servants ask to do what seems good in thine eyes.' "

## III.

A second time he wrote unto them, saying,—  
" If ye indeed are mine, then this do ye ;—  
" Show your allegiance and zeal by slaying  
" Your master's sons, and bringing unto me  
" Their heads to-morrow night." Obediently,  
The elders drew their swords of keenest steel ;  
And sev'nty headless, quiv'ring bodies,—see  
There in one ghastly heap ! O bloody zeal !—  
The frightful heads are sent in baskets to Jezreel.

## IV.

A messenger reported in the ear  
Of Jehu,—“I’m commissioned, Sire, to state,  
“That they have brought the heads!”—No trace of fear  
“Or grief was shown by Jehu.—“’Tis now late ;”  
He said, “pile them in two heaps by the gate  
“Till dawn of day.” ’Tis done as Jehu bids ;  
And there are heads with fiendish stare of hate,—  
Heads, too, whose glazed eyes peer through half-closed lids,—  
And heads—but I refrain.—They formed two pyramids.

## V.

When daylight dawned, the people gathered round  
The sick’ning spectacle ; and Jehu came  
And said unto the crowd whom there he found,  
“Ye Israelites, in whose eyes leaps the flame  
“Of indignation at this deed, I claim  
“Your patient hearing. I, ’tis true, conspired  
“And slew my master ; but let Justice blame  
“Some other hand for this.—Your souls are fired  
“With rage ; and righteous anger is to be admired :

## VI.

“ But learn ye wisely to discriminate  
“ Between a deed of reckless butchery  
“ Which should excite your horror and your hate,  
“ And this just act of retribution. We  
“ See here the fall of Ahab's house ; but he  
“ O'er Naboth's house by cruelty prevailed ;  
“ And even as Elijah said 't would be,  
“ So has it come to pass ;—no jot has failed ;—  
“ On Ahab's house the fate of Naboth's was entailed.”

## VII.

The crowd departed, brooding o'er the deed ;  
And Jehu then, his kingship to proclaim,  
Rode to Samaria, at swiftest speed ;  
And upon Ahaziah's brethren came,  
Hard by the shearing-house, and asked the aim  
And object of their journey,—“ We”, said they,  
“ Go down to see king Joram.” At that name  
Jehu said to his servants, “ Seize and slay !”  
No second word those princes heard,—their corpses strewed the way.

## VIII.

Departing thence he chances soon to light  
On Jonadab, the son of Rechab. See,  
They stop ; and Jehu says,—“Is thy heart right,  
“As my heart is with thy heart? If it be  
“Give me thy hand.” “Most willingly,” said he.  
King Jehu now to Jonadab extends  
The hand of friendship, and says, “Come with me,  
“And see my zeal for God :” and now the friends  
Dash o’er the plain, nor tighten rein until their journey ends.

## IX.

As Jehu’s chariot through the gateway curved,  
He said unto the nobles by the wall,  
“Baal by Ahab was but little served ;  
“Jehu shall serve him much. Now therefore call  
“To me all Baal’s prophets, likewise all  
“His servants, all his priests, and let there none  
“Absent himself ; for wrath shall surely fall  
“In sternest punishment on any one  
“Who is not there, to bow in prayer, at set of sun.



## X.

“I have a mighty sacrifice to do  
“To Baal.” But he spoke deceitfully,  
Detesting Baal and his priesthood too ;  
And had resolved the holocaust should be  
The priests themselves ; their cry of agony  
In death, an awful wailing which should swell  
The requiem service of their deity ;  
And Baal’s falling house should sound the knell  
Of Baal’s idol worship throughout Israel.

## XI.

So Jehu charged the heralds to proclaim  
His order throughout Israel. They went  
And ev’rywhere proclaimed it ; and all came,—  
Prophets and priests,—none daring to absent  
Himself, for each one feared the punishment  
Denounced against the man that should offend.  
And now, upon the coming scene intent,  
Prophets and priests in crowds the hill ascend,  
And soon is Baal’s temple filled from end to end.

## XII.

To him that kept the vestry, Jehu said,  
"Bring forth the vestments for the priests." 'Twas done ;  
And, like an army of the sheeted dead,  
They filled the silent Temple of the Sun.  
"Search well," said Jehu, "that there may be none  
"Among you, of the servants of the Lord."  
They searched and answered that there was not one.  
Then Jehu, who their sacrifice abhorred,  
Appointed fourscore men without who drew the sword ;

## XIII.

And said to them, "If any whom I've brought  
"Into your hands, escape ; who lets him go,  
"Forfeits his own life." Quick as flashed the thought,  
They drew their swords and answered, "Be it so !"  
Then burnt the temple o'er the priests. The glow  
Of that dread fire, which roaring rose to tell  
The murd'rous deed, was seen afar ; when lo !  
With crash of thunder the vast building fell,  
And Baal's worship was destroyed in Israel.

END OF ELEVENTH CANTO.



## Canto Twelfth.

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"Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him."—ISAIAH iii. 10<sup>a</sup>

## I.

"HAIL! Mighty Prophet, Consecrated Flame  
"Burning before the High and Lofty One  
"Inhabiting Eternity, whose name  
"Alone is God, thy work on earth is done ;—  
"In ashes lies the Temple of the Sun ;  
"The rites of Baal's priesthood, too, are o'er ;  
"For, Baal's priests have perished, and there's none  
"Of Ahab's house remaining. As God swore,  
"So hath it come to pass. Be humble, and adore.

## II.

“Lo, God, Himself, His chariot hath sent  
“To carry thee in triumph to the skies.”  
So spake the Spirit; and Elijah bent  
In lowly reverence, and veiled his eyes  
Before the dazzling Presence. “Rise, O, rise!”  
The Spirit said, “and for thy crown prepare;  
“The battle ’s fought, and thine ’s the victor’s prize;  
“The chariot waits; Heav’n’s coursers paw the air,  
“Impatient to descend, and thee from earth to bear.”

## III.

“Is it a dream?” Elijah said; “O, no!  
“Oft have I heard that loving voice before.—  
“Blest Spirit, I am Thine, and long to go;  
“Lead where Thou wilt, I’ll follow and adore.”  
The vision passed away; and slowly o’er  
The prophet, did the truth its rainbow bend;—  
Broken at first and faint, but as he more  
And more its perfect arc could comprehend,  
The hues of love in Heav’n above, with earth’s light seemed to  
blend.

## IV.

He sought his friend Elisha, unto whom  
He told the wondrous story of God's grace ;—  
How he, a mortal, should escape the tomb,  
And be, by fiery steeds, through realms of space  
Borne upward, till before Jehovah's face  
He took his place for ever. No falt'ring breath,  
No sigh of death, no sorrow should he know.  
Changed in his flight ; a glorious robe of light  
Would instantly around his spirit flow.

## V.

"Farewell, Elisha"; said the mighty seer,  
"Be faithful to the cause I leave with thee.  
"Jehovah liveth ; thou hast naught to fear ;  
"Be valiant for the truth."—"I will"; said he,  
"But must we so soon say 'Farewell' ?—Ah, me !  
"This life 's a vapour ; and our lives for years  
"Have fondly blended ;—now, alas ! 't will be  
"That one, exhaled, in sunlight disappears ;—  
'The other, chilled by sorrow, is dissolved in tears.

## VI.

"I'll leave thee not ; wherever thou dost go,  
"Faithful, I will be with thee to the end ;  
"How much this heart hath loved thee, thou dost know ;  
"And thou hast ever been to me a friend.  
"All-wise is God ; and to His will I bend ;  
"But O, 'tis hard to part from one so dear.  
"Though thou art called, to glory to ascend,  
"My selfish heart would still detain thee here,  
"For life without thy friendship were a desert drear."—

## VII.

"Elisha, there is happiness above ;  
"Calm thou thy spirit, and its griefs restrain ;  
"Where God Himself is, and where all is love,  
"We yet in His good time shall meet again.  
"Farewell ! Farewell ! Thou must not me detain ;  
"God works in love ; in love doth He bereave thee."—  
"Most true ; but O, thou comfortest in vain ;"  
Elisha said, "for worlds I would not grieve thee ;  
"But, as Jehovah lives, I cannot, will not, leave thee."

## VIII.

Then down to Bethel did the two friends go ;  
And children of the prophets came ; and they  
Unto Elisha said, " Ah ! dost thou know,  
" The God of Israel will take away  
" Thy lord and master from thy head to-day ? "  
" Wake not my grief," he said ; " the truest token  
" Of sympathy is silence ; therefore lay  
" Your hands upon your mouths ; for, when the spirit's broken,  
" The kindest words of love are those which are unspoken."

## IX.

Again Elijah importuned his friend  
To leave him, for he longed to be alone ;—  
The hours were few before he should ascend  
From earth's dim shadows, to Jehovah's throne  
Of dazzling splendour, and, as none had known  
Honour so great, he humbly shunned the gaze  
Of mortal men ; for he could not but own  
Himself unmeet for e'en the faintest rays  
Of glory ; how much more for its triumphant blaze !



## X.

The brightest jewel in the costliest shrines  
Where God is worshipped is humility.  
'Tis like a star which trembles while it shines ;  
And, through its trembling, brighter seems to be.—  
That jewel, in its purest brilliancy,  
Adorned Elijah's character.—With men,  
He was a man !—and bowed to none ! But he,  
Before Jehovah,—was a child ; and when  
He thought of all God's love to him, he wept again.

## XI.

The two friends journeyed down to Jericho ;  
And there, as 'twas at Bethel, many said  
To sorrowing Elisha, "Dost thou know  
"That God will take thy master from thy head,  
"And that to-day?" Elisha's kind heart bled  
As thus he answered them ;—"Peace ! friends ; be wise.  
"All words are harrowing when hope is dead.  
"True friendship breathes its sympathy in sighs ;  
"And love's most loving words are spoken by the eyes."

## XII.

Once more Elijah said, "Now stay thou here,  
"Elisha, for Jehovah's word is still  
" 'Onward !' " Then answered he, "O friend most dear,  
" Surely I am not thwarting His high will,  
" In clinging to thy presence here until  
" He take thee to Himself. Bid me not go.  
" A little while, and grief my cup will fill,  
" E'en till the bitter waters overflow,  
" And this true heart which loves thee is nigh drowned in woe."

## XIII.

"Peace, troubled heart ! 'Tis only doubt that sorrows ;  
"Faith, trusting, says, e'en though through falling tears,—  
" 'Tis God who for a little season borrows  
" 'The gift His hand bestowed in bygone years.'  
"O, Gracious God, each loss Thyself endears,  
"For Thee we cannot lose. Thou art the same  
"For ever ; and dost gently chide our fears ;  
"Telling the grief-crushed heart, o'erwhelmed with shame,  
"That there is hope, for 'I AM' is Thy glorious name.

## XIV.

“‘I AM thy Father ;—doubt Me not, My child.  
“‘I AM thy Friend ;—O fly thou not from Me.  
“‘I AM thy God ;—be not by sin beguiled.  
“‘I AM thine All ;—I give Myself to thee.  
“‘I AM ’—the rest is blank, that it may be  
“Filled up by man according to his need.—  
“Trust thou in Him, Elisha ; happy he  
“Who, though through griefs which cause his heart to bleed,  
“Learns that the heart of God is merciful indeed.

## XV.

“Now,” said Elijah, “tell me, what would’st thou  
“That I should do for thee, Elisha ? Say,  
“Before God’s chariot these heav’ns shall bow,  
“And in a whirlwind carry me away.”—  
“Let there be given unto me, I pray,  
“A double portion of thy spirit ; he  
“Whom God appoints as prophet in thy place,  
“Has need, indeed, of God’s especial grace.”—  
“A great request, but thou may’st rest assured that if thou see  
“My glorious flight to realms of light, thy pray’r is granted thee.”

## XVI.

Thus talked the prophets, as they slowly went  
From Jericho to Jordan ; whilst on high  
Stood fifty men to view the rapt ascent  
Of him whose pray'r of faith had closed the sky,  
Made Heav'n's swift lightnings as his servants fly,  
And raised the dead to life again ! The two  
Soon reached the Jordan's bank. No boat was nigh ;  
Nor was one needed ;—God had said, “ This do,  
“ Smite thou in faith the waters, and go dryshod through.”

## XVII.

With joyous faith in God, the Gracious Giver,  
Elijah took the mantle from his shoulders ;  
And, folding it together, smote the river  
Which roaring rushed between the massive boulders  
Stemming its course. The wondering beholders  
Saw, from the height, the waters with affright  
Rush backward, and there leave a pathway wide ;  
For thus Elijah spoke,—“ Jehovah saith,—‘ Divide ! ’ ”  
Hushed was the torrent's roar ;—all was as death.  
Even the swift-winged winds held their breath,  
Till the prophets in safety had reached the far side ;  
When the river again rolled along in its pride.

## XVIII.

The sun had set ; and, as they journeyed on,  
They thought they caught the sound of distant thunder ;  
Then nearer, clearer ; but, o'erhead, stars shone ;  
And, on the horizon, silv'ry clouds sailed under  
The deep blue sky. With mingled awe and wonder,  
The prophets turned and saw that towards them came  
From Heav'n a chariot and steeds of flame !  
While Nebo's sacred mountain, with age hoary  
And crowned with snow, was radiant with the glow  
Of that celestial and unutterable glory.

## XIX.

Ethereal, yet visible ; for, bright  
Unto intensity through purest light  
Indwelling, was that chariot of the skies.  
The horses, too, were creatures not of earth ;  
Their necks were clothed with thunder ; and their eyes,  
Starry with beauty, told of Heav'nly birth.  
No harness fettered them ; no curb nor girth  
Restrained the freedom of those glorious ones,

Nor traces yoked the chariot at their heels ;  
It followed them, as planets follow suns  
Through trackless space, in their empyreal courses ;  
For lo ! the fiery spirit of the horses  
Was as a mighty presence in the wheels,  
And in the dazzling whirlwind which behind them flew  
And caught Elijah up, as sunlight drinks the dew.

## XX.

Away, away to Heav'n those steeds upbore him ;  
Leaving the clouds as dust beneath their feet.  
Wide open flashed the golden gates before him ;  
And angel-forms of splendour rose to greet  
The favoured prophet. Oh, the rapture sweet !  
The ecstasy most thrilling which came o'er him !—  
But thoughts are voiceless when we soar thus high  
And, like the lark that vainly strives to beat  
With little wings the air and pierce the sky,  
We fall again to earth. Elisha there  
Wept o'er his loss, but wept not in despair.

No ; though a few regretful tear-drops fell,  
He knew that with Elijah all was well ;  
For through the open gates of Heav'n there rang  
Strains of the song of welcome which the angels sang.

## XXI.

O who can picture that transcendent sight !  
Who fitly can relate the wondrous story ;  
Who paint the aërial beauty of that night,  
Or sing the fleetness of those steeds of glory  
And God's triumphant chariot of light  
Entering Heav'n ! Never, in depth or height,  
Had mortal gazed on such a scene before ;  
Never shall years, how long soe'er their flight,  
The solemn grandeur of that hour restore,  
Till Heav'n's last thunder peals forth " It is done !"  
And the archangel, dazzling as the sun,  
Descends to earth ; and, standing on the shore  
Of ages, swears with upraised hand by ONE  
Who lived ere time its cycles had begun,  
That time shall be no more.

THE END.

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